University of Alberta

An Ethnographic Study of Secondary Music Education in Cuba: Insights for Canadian Music Education

by

Lisa Lorenzino ©

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of the
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DEDICATION

For my family members,

in Canada

and

in Cuba.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

The aims of this study were to produce an ethnography of secondary music education in Santiago de Cuba and to consider possible changes to Canadian music education on the basis of the ethnography. Specifically, the study focused on the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and culture. In order to place the study in context, data were gathered from elementary, secondary, post-secondary, and community musical institutions located in or near the field setting.

The primary focus for the study was outlined by the following question: "What is the relationship of culture, curriculum, and pedagogy, and how does it influence secondary music education in Cuba?" Participants in the study were drawn from three distinct categories. Group I consisted of students, teachers, and administrators from the three schools selected for the study, as well as their extended families, friends, and neighbours. Group II consisted of English language students at the *Universidad de Oriente*, Santiago de Cuba, and their extended families, friends, and neighbours. Group III consisted of the members of the researcher's host Cuban family, their extended families, friends, and neighbours.

Results indicate that culture has a significant effect on curriculum formation and implementation. Cuban ideology has produced a unique Cuban philosophy of pedagogy. Distinctly Cuban pedagogical practices have led to the development of a secondary music education system where students are employed as music professionals immediately after graduation from secondary school.

In a country that values participation in musical activities by all of its citizens, the profession of musician is seen as one of the most prized. While economic factors have severely influenced both curriculum development and implementation, positive social factors within Cuban society do play an integral role in the equation.

The study outlines the predominant ideological principles that appear to influence Cuban music education. In addition, the author highlights pedagogical practices that she has integrated into her teaching as a result of her research in Cuba. The study concludes with a listing of the perceived strengths of the Cuban music education system as well as a discussion of Cuban pedagogical and cultural practices that could be adapted in order to assist Canadian music educators.

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Even greater thanks are due to the students, parents, teachers, and administrators at the *Conservatorio "Esteban Salas," la Escuela de Música "Lauro Fuentes,"* and *la Escuela Vocacional de Artes*. Without them, there would be no study.

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Additional thanks must be made to both of my Cuban "*familias*" that housed me for my extended stays in Cuba. Thank you for your assistance, your conversation, your openness, your personal sacrifice and most especially, your love. You shall forever stay close to my heart. Thank you also to the many friends, relatives and neighbours of my Cuban families, you truly made me feel at home in a foreign land.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CES: *Conservatorio "Esteban Salas"* (Esteban Salas Music School)

CIDMUC: *Centro de Investigaciones y Desarrollo de la Música Cubana* (Center for Research and Development of Cuban Music)

CNEART: *Centro Nacional de Escuelas de Artes* (Center for National Arts Schools)

DPE: *Departamiento Provincial de Educación* (Provincial Department of Education)

el ISA: *Instituto Superior de Artes "Eduardo García Delgado"* (Eduardo García Delgado Superior Arts Institute)

EMLF: *Escuela de Música "Lauro Fuentes"* (Lauro Fuentes Music School)

FOIPP: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

La Banda: *La Banda de Música Municipal de Santiago de Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba Municipal Concert Band)

la EVA: *Escuela Vocacional de Artes "José María Heredia"* (José María Heredia Fine Arts School)

MINCULT: *Ministerio de Cultura de Cuba* (Cuban Ministry of Culture)

MINED: *Ministerio de Educación de Cuba* (Cuban Ministry of Education)

MINSAP: *Ministerio de Salud Pública de Cuba* (Cuban Ministry of Public Health)

OSO: *Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente* (Oriente Symphony Orchestra)

PCO: *Partido Comunista* (Cuban Communist Party)

Pepito Tey: Escuela de Instructores de Artes "Pepito Tey" (Pepito Tey School of Instructors of Art)

WEAM: Western European Art Music or "classical" music

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Figure 1: A member of the Cuban army riding a bicycle in downtown Santiago de Cuba. On the left, the school of *superación* and the remains of the former percussion building for *Conservatorio Esteban Salas*.

Preface

The road traveled in pursuit of this dissertation has been fueled by boredom, luck, and naiveté. The journey began on a dreary November afternoon as I walked into a choir rehearsal. My mood mirrored the weather. I was feeling dissatisfied, listless, and lost in my first semester as a doctoral student, and I shared these sentiments with Gisèle, a fellow second alto. I explained how I felt that I had no direction as a Ph.D. student and was floundering in search of a dissertation topic. Gisèle simply inquired, "Why don't you go to Cuba?"

As luck would have it, Gisèle was a former student of Augustana University College, an affiliate of the University of Alberta. She described a semester abroad project sponsored by the college that was available to non-Augustana students. The college arranged for students to study with Cuban scholars, live with Cuban families, and work closely with the English language students at the *Universidad de Oriente* in Santiago de Cuba. Held every two years, the next project would be traveling to Cuba in just over a year.

Gisèle's description of the program intrigued me. The idea of going to Cuba to study and possibly complete my dissertation seemed like a very real and worthwhile proposition. Prior to this day, I had been searching for a dissertation topic. I had had lengthy conversations with professors in an attempt to identify an area of possible expertise. I had researched topics that I found to be intriguing and I had asked friends and colleagues to assist me in my search.

The most useful assistance I received was from my older sister who had advised me to identify my passions in life. Once I had determined them, she encouraged me to search for a topic that incorporated them all. A bit hesitant to incorporate my sister's advice, I nonetheless sat down with pen and paper. Quickly, I identified two areas as my passions: music and travel.

Interestingly, I found that I didn't consider music to be a passion as such. Rather, I felt that music was larger than a passion, it was my vocation and had been since I was four years old. My passion for travel came later in life, but it has become as important to me as music. Co-existing with my passion for music and travel, I determined several smaller areas that intrigued me: my interest in food, learning foreign languages, experiencing new situations, and meeting new people. So, too, do I thrive on developing compassion and understanding as I learn about the human condition, especially one that is different from my own. Completing my research in Cuba could easily fulfill my desire to work with all of my passions and many of my areas of interest.

Eunice Boardman Meske (1990), in her contribution to the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, identified many factors influencing the development of music education in North America. Boardman Meske hypothesized that North American music education will not undergo any significant reform until researchers begin to investigate paradigm shifts that are more radical in their approach to change. I had read Boardman Meske's article in the first semester of my doctoral studies; therefore, when the opportunity to research music education in Cuba arose, I found it very appealing. My roots in social justice and my disillusionment with North American consumer culture further added to the allure of study in Cuba.

I therefore chose Cuba as the location for my research primarily because it allowed me to follow my passions and interests. In addition, I chose Cuba because it was an easily accessible country, in terms of language and geographical location, that provided a radical paradigm shift from which to study music education: a developing nation, a poor and struggling country, with a distinctly non-Capitalist, non-consumer-based ideology. Through my travels in Central and South America, I knew that much could be learned from the cultural values found in *Latino* or Spanish-speaking societies. I wondered how we as North Americans might additionally learn from a Communist *Latino* country.

It was with naiveté that I returned to my office immediately after talking with Gisèle. There, I quickly pronounced to my fellow graduate students that I would be going to Cuba the following year to start work on my dissertation. From that day onward, never did I doubt my pursuit of this topic. I did not question my decision to travel to Cuba while sitting on all-night buses freezing in the Cuban air conditioning or when, alone and in pain, I nursed a Caribbean jellyfish sting. I did not regret my decision when I collapsed in the intense midday heat or was sent to yet another government office in attempt to receive authorization to enter the Cuban schools. For me, the pursuit of my passions has been a worthy voyage.

Figure 2: A farmer working the fields with his two oxen in Piñar del Rio province. In the background are typical rural Cuban homes constructed of wood with thatched roofs.

A brief personal history will add some framework to the reader's understanding of this document, why I chose this topic, and why I structured the paper in the manner that I did. I came from an unremarkable background. One generation removed from the land, I was raised in a farming community of 15,000 in southern Saskatchewan. My father, prior to having his family, worked as a music teacher in the local high school and later taught private piano lessons to all of his children. My mother stayed at home to care for my three siblings and me.

As Catholics and as Saskatchewanites, my siblings and I were raised with a strong sense of social justice. So too were we infused with a powerful sense of community responsibility. (Saskatchewan is the birthplace of the Canadian medicare system.) As a family, we had significant socialist leanings in the form of a sense of civic duty and a desire to aid the underprivileged.

Immediately following high school, I pursued a career in music education by obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Music and a second Bachelor's degree in Education. Immediately following graduation, I started my career and spent 13 years as a junior high/high school teacher of Music (band, choir, guitar), and French. I worked in a variety of teaching situations ranging from a public school in Northern Alberta to a private girls' school in downtown Montreal. Additionally, I worked extensively with student teachers in three Canadian provinces both as a Mentor Teacher and University Facilitator.

In my Masters' work, seeking to improve Canadian music education, my research focused on how to reform existing music education programs so as to better fulfill the needs of our education system. In my doctoral study, still maintaining this focus to advance Canadian music education, I finally decided to concentrate my research specifically upon curriculum studies and the effect that culture can have upon the development of music education.

I prepared myself for my first foray to Cuba by enrolling in courses that focused on ethnomusicological field work and the history of education in developing nations. Despite this, I felt rather naïve about Cuba. Though I believed that I had a good understanding of the history, both musical and political, of Cuba, I had had very little contact with Cubans.

I decided to chose ethnography as my research methodology as I believed it to be the best medium to answer my research questions, because of access to the Ethnomusicology Department at the Univeristy of Alberta, and because I felt that this methodology well-suited my personality. As a seasoned traveler, I enjoyed understanding a culture intimately. Rather than be a tourist in an all-inclusive resort, I liked to immerse myself in a culture, live with its people, and experience their daily lives. The traditions of ethnography and ethnomusicology encourage both participation and observation on the part of the researcher, and I believed that I could effectively collect data using this methodology.

Traditionally, ethnography, like grounded theory, also involves the development of theory after data have been collected. Therefore, prior to completing my field work, I did not investigate theoretical research as related to culture, pedagogy, and curriculum. In many ways, I went to Cuba not knowing what it was I would find there.

Prior to travelling to Cuba, I had several preconceived ideas as to what I would experience. Many musicians considered Cuba to be a type of musical "Mecca" where one could hear quality live music on every street corner. I knew Cuban music to be rhythmically complex and that the country consistently exported talented musicians. What I did not know about Cuba was that it also had a strong tradition of classical flute playing that had developed into a vibrant use of the flute in contemporary Afro-Cuban music. This was an unforeseen pleasure that I came to experience as a flute player.

I had several areas of interest that I wanted to investigate in Cuba. One area that I wanted to study was rhythmic development. As a musician, I felt that rhythm was one of my weaknesses. In part, I attributed this weakness to ineffective teaching in North America. I was also curious about the myth of the Cuban trumpet player. I wondered if Arturo Sandoval was an anomaly or simply one of many trumpet players with an extended *altissimo* range.

My curiosity also focused on pedagogical and curricular factors. I was curious as to how music came to be so valued by Cuban society. I wanted to learn what percentage of the Cuban music education curriculum focused on Afro-Cuban music and on Western European Art Music (WEAM). So too did I want to learn how Cuban music educators were trained, and if their pedagogical practices were strongly influenced by Communist ideals. Further, I wanted to investigate the effect of budgetary restraints on Cuban music education and gender issues affecting music students and teachers.

What follows is an interpretive understanding of how I participated in, observed, and taught courses in the secondary music schools in Cuba. The dissertation follows a traditional format while attempting to fuse the varied research domains of music education and ethnomusicology. I have endeavoured to be sensitive to the traditions and expectations of both domains with the result being a document that may be considered slightly altered from either perspective. This paper additionally borrows, on occasion, from the fields of interpretive inquiry and hermeneutics.

The format of the document is relatively standard. Immediately following is an outline of the scope of research, problem definition, and research questions guiding the study. The paper continues with a review of literature focusing on the separate histories of music and education in Cuba as experienced both prior to and after the 1959 Revolution. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed in the study including a detailed description of the field setting. Chapters 4 through 7, focusing on data collected in my fieldwork, include an overview of secondary music education in Santiago de Cuba, case studies from two Santiago music schools, and additional data reporting. The final chapter, Chapter 8, straying slightly from the traditional format, is an amalgam of data interpretation, detailed discussion, and insights for Canadian music educators.

This paper could only be written by a white Canadian music educator with rural roots and urban leanings. In content and in interpretation, the product would be very different had it been written by a *Latino* musician, an American jazz educator, or a Cuban music teacher. The framework in which this paper is embedded clearly reflects my background and belief system. It has not been my intent in any manner to cause unforeseeable malice as a result of this work; rather, it has been and remains my intent to learn from the strengths of others.

In conclusion, I must note that, as is often found with ethnographic research, I find myself changed as a person, as a pedagogue, and as a musician, because of my work in Cuba. Not only have I completed my requirements for a doctoral dissertation, so too have I had many inspirational experiences that have caused me to grow and develop. My gains have been many. I have had the opportunity to increase my confidence as I worked extensively in my third language; I have become part of a Cuban family for life; and I have learned to love the sensitive, generous, hardworking, celebratory people of Cuba. Most exciting of all, I have had reinstilled within me a love and passion for my instrument, the flute, an unforeseen benefit that I shall long cherish.

Problem Definition

Cuba is a relatively small, poor, struggling country caught in the grip of a long-lasting U.S. embargo. This Caribbean nation is also one of the few socialist countries remaining in a world increasingly dominated by capitalist monoculture. Nonetheless, Cuba is internationally renowned for a thriving musical culture where virtually every citizen is involved in music making. Despite a population of only 11 million, Cuba continues to make significant contributions to music worldwide.

Cuba's education system has long been envied internationally. Not only does the country view education as one of its topmost priorities (Bérubé, 1984), Cuba also boasts one of the highest literacy rates in Central America (Gumbert, 1988; Johnston, 1995). Cuba is regarded as a leader in effective educational reform and is recognized as having successfully implemented some of the most widespread curricular changes of the past century (Bérubé, 1984). Cuba, the largest of the Caribbean nations, is also noteworthy in that its education system is intimately connected to the country's economic development, the rise of patriotism, and the subsistence of the communist political agenda (Gumbert, 1988).

A study of the Cuban education system could be of substantial benefit to researchers in Canada. Insight as to the effects of literacy and the study of the humanities upon the economic and political growth of the Cuban nation could aid Canada's understandings of the political/economic/ education equation. An analysis of Cuban music education could also enable Canadian researchers to identify effective methods of implementing long-awaited educational reforms (Boardman Meske, 1990).

From a cultural/musical perspective, a study of Cuban music could help Canadian researchers discern how culture becomes valued. Cuba has made extensive musical contributions to its own history but also, relative to its population, Cuba has made a surprisingly large contribution to the history of music worldwide. Not only has Cuba given birth to numerous innovative musical genres such as *rumba*, *salsa*, *son*, and *danzón* (Ayala, 1998), Cuban music has also significantly altered the global development of jazz, pop, and world beat music (Mauleón, 1993; Roberts, 1979; Werner, 1992). A study of Cuban music education could enable Canadian researchers to gain an understanding of how a country's cultural identity can mature and influence the entire globe.

Mirroring recent financial cutbacks in Canadian education, the demise of the Soviet Union has placed significant economic and political restraints upon Cuban education. Major alterations in the organization/delivery of curriculum, the ability of educators to obtain supplies, and the ability of schools to acquire qualified teachers has forced Cuban education officials to react quickly to a new educational environment (*New Internationalist*, 1998; Eckstein, 1997). Despite these widespread changes, Cuban music and Cuban music education still thrive (Robbins, 1990; Delgado, 2001). An understanding of how Cuban music educators can continue to provide high-quality services in the wake of extreme restrictions could be of importance to Canadian researchers as they face similar challenges in their educational environment.

Finally, from a strictly pedagogical perspective, a study of Cuban music education could aid greatly in the rhythmic development of Canadian musicians. Throughout my 13 years as a high school music teacher, I noted weaknesses in the rhythmic skills of my Canadian students. A study of Cuban music, with its rhythmic intricacies and complexities, combined with a study of the pedagogical practices used to teach these complex elements effectively, could prove very beneficial to Canadian music educators.

Scope of Research

The aims of this project were to produce an ethnography of music education at the secondary level in Santiago de Cuba and to consider possible changes to Canadian music education on the basis of the ethnography. Specifically, the study focused on the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and culture in music education at the secondary level. In order to place the study in context, data were gathered from elementary, secondary, post-secondary, and community musical institutions located in or near the field setting.

Research Questions

The primary focus of the study was to study the relationship between culture, curriculum, and pedagogy in music education at the secondary level in Cuba. The following questions served as secondary focuses:

1. What is the philosophy of pedagogy of teachers and administrators involved in music education in Cuba?
2. How does culture influence the development of a philosophy of pedagogy in Cuba?
3. How is curriculum implemented and what factors influence its implementation?
4. What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of music education at the secondary level?
5. What are the current challenges facing the existing system of music education?
6. How do students, parents, teachers, and administrators view the current system of music education in Cuba?

7. What influence do the factors of gender and race have upon students and teachers involved in music education at the secondary level in Cuba?

8. What influence do economic and political factors have upon the existing system of music education at the secondary level in Cuba?

9. What insights can this study offer for Canadian music education?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

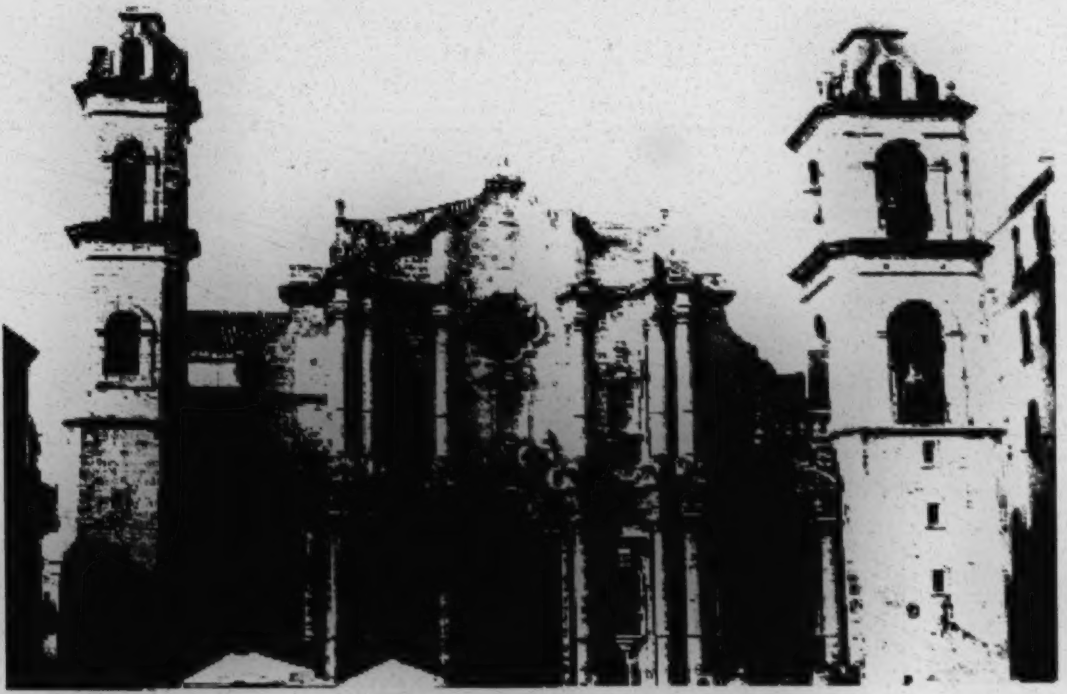

Figure 3: One of the best known symbols of the Catholic church in Cuba: the Cathedral in Havana Vieja.

In an attempt to frame the existing system of music education in Cuba, two distinct histories must be presented. First, I will outline the history of the Cuban education system stemming from its religious roots in the 19th century on through to its current secular status. Second, I will outline the history of Cuban cultural development ranging from its Imperialist Iberian beginnings on through to its contemporary nationwide celebration of *Afrocubanismo*. I will divide each of these two sections into pre-1959 and post-1959 segments using the Cuban Revolution of January 1, 1959 and its radical ideological shift as the point of division. A separate section on the history of music education in Cuba will not be included. Instead, important policies and historical events relating to the history of Cuban music education will be outlined in the appropriate educational or cultural subsection.

History of Cuban Education

Introduction

In 21st century Canada, the influence of politics upon education appears to be of ever increasing concern. As I look to the mass media, I often see education becoming the high profile play toy of elected officials and big business. Often, I find myself puzzled by the political/educational debate in Canada. Upon further reflection, I realize that education and politics have always been intimately related for, by its very nature, a nation's education system is born out of its ruling political ideology. It is the degree to which a political system influences the history and development of an education system that appears to be variable.

Cuba, with a history ranging from Spanish, to British, to American, and ultimately to autonomous rule, has always placed education in the political spotlight. MacDonald (1985) even goes so far as to state that the Cuban Revolution was fought primarily for the right to universal education. That education in Cuba has and will continue to be highly political can be readily seen in a brief survey of its history.

Education in Pre-Revolutionary Cuba

Paralleling the history of Canadian education, the roots of the national system of education in Cuba are religious in nature. According to Santalices (2001), Spanish Catholic clerics began establishing small schools aligned with their individual religious orders in Cuba as early as 1688. Unlike their religious brothers and sisters in Canada however, these clerical colonizers were not interested in the education of the local indigenous population and only allowed the Spanish-born to enter their institutions (Johnston, 1995).

The Spanish government passed laws making education compulsory in Cuba as early as 1842 (Epstein, 1987). Under Spanish law, primary schooling became the responsibility of the municipality while secondary and post-secondary education was delegated to the province. Both province and municipality were controlled nationally from Havana but the majority of educational responsibility lay squarely in the hands of individual communities (Epstein, 1987).

School was made compulsory for children aged six through nine in 19th century Cuba but Spain did not provide an adequate system of schooling for the black and rural populations. "Despite enlightened Spanish laws which, if implemented, plausibly would have given Cuba a democratic and far-reaching system of public schools, the social and economic conditions of colonialism precluded any significant educational impact on the island" (Epstein, 1987, p. 7).

From the 18th through the 20th centuries, education in Cuba was overwhelmingly racist and elitist. Early denominational schools were attended only by males (Johnston, 1995) with the schools' primary purpose being to serve as a "means of suppressing national liberation by preaching loyalty to the crown and to church" (Johnston, 1995, p. 26). The male Spanish-born students completed their elementary training in Cuba and were often sent home to Spain in order to finish secondary school in a more suitable environment.

Unfortunately, the majority of the early clerical schools along with the fledgling Cuban education system were devastated in the Cuban Liberational War of 1895-1898

(Johnston, 1995). At this point, rather than being allowed a system of self-government, Cuba remained under foreign control. Instead of the Spanish, Cuba was now governed by the United States Army (1898-1901). Like previous Spanish colonial rulers, the Americans sought to indoctrinate the Cuban population with their "superior" way of life and viewed the local population as inferior, second-class citizens who needed to be civilized (Johnston, 1995).

It was this provisionary United States based government under the rule of General Wood that made the first attempts at developing a system of public education for the Caribbean nation (Epstein, 1987); regrettably, their efforts proved quite unsuccessful. Instead of allowing the Cuban population to build a system based on local ideals and philosophies, an American model of education from the state of Ohio was adopted. American experts were contracted to teach Cuban teachers, American textbooks were translated into Spanish, and the American curriculum was adapted for use across the nation (Johnston, 1995). Not surprisingly, local inhabitants were not attracted to an American style education and the public system did not develop to its fullest potential. Again, not surprisingly, the Americans blamed the Cubans, not themselves, for the failure of the system (Johnston, 1995).

After a second occupation of the U.S. Army in 1906-1909, Cuba was left to govern itself, under the supervision of the United States, and education finally became a national concern. The newly elected government now began the process of establishing the first true national system of education with the belief that "public instruction must teach the rights and duties of citizenship, foster patriotism and national solidarity, and aim to meet the country's employment and production requirements" (Johnston, 1995, p. 28).

As with many other developing nations, problems arose. Because the largely agrarian population did not believe in the value of education, enrollments and attendance levels in Cuban schools were low even though schooling was legislated as compulsory. Further complications emerged as schools were unevenly distributed throughout the country with rural schools being in the minority. Not only was there poor hygiene, minimal resources, a lack of materials and space, high teacher turnover, and rampant teacher absenteeism, corruption was widespread at the administrative level (Johnston, 1995). The failure of the Cuban government to address these problems convinced many parents to abandon the system and turn to a rapidly developing private school sector.

Three types of private schools began to prosper in the new island nation. One stream was operated by the various Christian denominations, with the Catholic and Methodist religions being in the majority. These denominational schools, while emphasizing literacy, mathematics, sciences, and the arts, existed primarily to educate the faithful in the doctrines of their religions. Elite Spanish schools, continuing on in the stream of colonial schooling in Cuba, offered a traditional European education. Unlike in colonial times, these Spanish schools were no longer gender biased and now accepted female students (Johnston, 1995).

Private schools, operated by businesses from the United States with interests in Cuba, also began to proliferate. These American schools frequently used English as their language of instruction and employed American curricula and textbooks as in the time of the provisional government (Johnston, 1995). Private schools were equal to the public schools in three facets: the black student was separated from the white, the impoverished from the wealthy, and the rural from the urban.

In the opinion of many Cubans, the private school sector was detrimental to the country as it posed a severe threat to patriotism. Because the private schools were administered by foreign interests, Cuban holidays and traditions were not practiced. Nor did the private schools use locally produced texts or include Cuban history in their curriculum. According to many, patriotism in Cuba was being squelched by the growth of the private school system (Johnston, 1995).

Other Cubans felt that the private school system enabled and encouraged widespread graft, a problem that plagued Cuban education until the early 1960s. Some Cuban citizens even went so far as to accuse the private schools of producing the "badly trained and corrupt professionals and politicians" or "those who caused frequent political disturbances in the new country" (Johnston, 1995, p. 29). Whether true or not, the existence of a private school sector produced a two-tiered education system. Regrettably, the public education system fell sadly behind.

Political unrest and public outrage over a violent government led by General Batista further wreaked havoc upon the emerging school system in Cuba during the 1930s. During this tumultuous decade, many schools were closed and numerous teachers had their salaries withheld or were even fired. The government further reacted by imprisoning students and teachers who opposed their political policies. In 1935, under Batista's leadership, the island's inhabitants viewed the education system as a barely surviving entity unable to fulfill the needs of its citizens (Johnston, 1995).

It must be noted that some of Batista's educational policies did positively alter Cuban education. Batista's government formulated a system of centrally appointed school inspectors and introduced an element of national organization. A centralized

Ministry of Education (*Ministerio de Educación* [*MINED*]) was established in Havana and the process of nationalizing the system of education continued (Johnston, 1995).

With rising political unrest during the Batista regime, for the second time in 100 years, the United States Army became responsible for Cuba's education system. Batista feared the rising popularity of the communist movement and reinstated the U.S. Army in its role to provide education for the masses. This practice was most commonly employed in the rural areas of the country but eventually spread throughout the entire nation (Johnston, 1995).

Following this reintroduction of the army into the Cuban education system, public confidence in the system steadily dwindled. Throughout the 1940s, the quality of rural education showed no improvement and conservative educators attacked the government for its attempts to foster a centralized school system. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the private school sector, impervious to state direction or control, flourished (Johnston, 1995).

By the 1950s, Cubans citizens were extremely frustrated and dissatisfied with their public education system. Patriotism was low and only radical reform seemed to provide the answers to both the political and educational concerns of Cuba. It was at this point in history that the young Fidel Castro, aware of the public's concern for education, carefully planned his rise to power. Placing education at the foundation of his political platform, Castro's vision for Cuban education proved to be one of the most insightful and successful ideologies in contemporary educational history.

Figure 4: A view of the Sierra Maestra mountains surrounding Santiago de Cuba. In the foreground, the city's baseball stadium, a sports school, and some banana fields.

On January 1, 1959, Fidel Castro, Che Gueverra, and other members of the *Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio* inherited a tattered and inefficient education system. Cuba's adult literacy rate stood at 23.6% and over 64% of school-aged children were not attending classes (Bérubé, 1984). Though school attendance of at least six years was compulsory, only 3% of the population completed this requirement (MacDonald, 1985). Further complicating the problem, the state did not run any preschools or kindergartens, educational administrators were notoriously corrupt, and teacher training was inconsistent (MacDonald, 1985).

In Havana, only one new school had been built between 1902 and 1959. In rural areas, schools were few and far between. A total of three universities existed in the nation but the majority of professors held "lucrative practices or consultancies outside of the university" (MacDonald, 1985, p. 46). Women and blacks were especially susceptible to an inadequate education.

Whereas Cuba's population valued education, until 1959 no government had been able to provide quality education for the masses. Knowing that his people yearned for an effective and efficient system, Castro set out from his first day in power to provide his people with a higher standard of education. Partially in payment for the dedication of the largely illiterate *guajiro* soldiers who fought valiantly in the Revolution, partially in an attempt to bolster a new economy, and perhaps most importantly, in pure concern for the plight of his people, Castro undertook a complete reform of the existing system of education in Cuba.

Educational inequalities had been on Castro's political platform prior to his ascent in revolutionary Cuba. In his infamous *History will Absolve Me* speech given on October 16, 1953 before the Emergency Tribunal in Santiago de Cuba, Castro's defense plea included numerous references to the inadequate schooling found in Cuba (Castro, 1961). Taking his inspiration largely from the writings of the 19th century Cuban poet, José Martí, and Carl Marx, Castro formulated the philosophical underpinnings of Cuba's post-revolutionary system of education.

From Martí (1953-1895), Castro philosophized that education needed to "end the existing divorce between theory and practices, study and work, intellectual work and manual work" (Figueroa, Prieto & Gutiérrez, 1974, p. 1). From Marx, Castro philosophized that education needed to be conceived as "the training of men as joined with productive and creative work" (*ibid.* p. 5). Combining these two ideologies, Castro set out to create an education system that:

> integrated productive work with school work, the school community with the rural community, educational development with the country's economic, social and cultural development, the formation of intellectual faculties with that of moral, social, physical and aesthetic faculties, the adolescent age group with the adult one, all this in a comprehensive vision of the new man and of a society confident in its future. (*ibid.* p. IV)

Some imply that it was Castro's very lack of pedagogical policies, his complete disregard of tradition and his radical jettisoning of all educational bureaucracy that enabled the new leader to be so successful in his educational reforms (MacDonald, 1985).

In 1960, Castro stated to the United Nations that he would eliminate illiteracy in Cuba within one calendar year. Intrigued by his proposal, UNESCO sent observers to Cuba to study the process but did not provide any form of funding for Cuban education (Bérubé, 1984). Resources for the development of Cuban education came instead from the Soviet Union, Cuba's new trade partner.

An alliance of the Cuban revolutionaries with the Communist Party in the early 1960s established new ties with the Communist Bloc countries. In return for increased trade of sugar and tobacco, the Soviet Union funneled the equivalent of billions of dollars into the Cuban economy. Much of this funding went towards the building of schools, some of which were constructed out of existing barracks, fortresses, or jails. The Moncada Barracks, where Fidel Castro had lodged his first assault against the Batista government, was amongst the sites transformed into schools.

Supported by Russian funds, Castro's 1961 Literacy Campaign became the most successful in history. Fidel's clear understanding of his people, his comprehensive knowledge of human psychology, his strong leadership skills, and his innovative ideas towards education helped ensure this success. The Literacy Campaign began with the hiring of 10,000 new teachers and the opening of 10,000 new classrooms to serve the grossly under-serviced rural areas (Gumbert, 1988). Next, the middle and secondary schools in Havana were closed for five months and students were sent out into the rural areas to teach their illiterate compatriots. Finally, housewives, factory workers, and other volunteers were solicited to aid in the cause. Including the student force, over 200,000 Cubans, mainly from urban areas, volunteered to move to the countryside to teach literacy (Gumbert, 1988).

Education and the development of literacy became the new focus of the entire nation. The result was not just a higher literacy level. The Cuban "peasants discovered the word, the volunteers discovered the poor, and all discovered their own *patria*" (Gumbert, 1988, p. 122). Volunteering was seen as a way of becoming involved in the cause of the Revolution. National pride soared.

Not only was national pride developed through the volunteer force, it was also the subject of the curriculum employed in the Literacy Campaign. Materials used for the program focused on pro-revolutionary topics and were written in part by Castro himself (Gumbert, 1988). Well aware that materials needed to be relevant to the largely rural illiterate population, Castro included information on improving farming and other agriculture related activities (Gumbert, 1988). Education in revolutionary Cuba now served four purposes: increasing economic strength, furthering the socialist political system, raising literacy levels, and developing national pride.

Castro returned to the United Nations with an impressive report card. Within one year, literacy levels in Cuba had risen to 95% and a new attitude towards education had begun to develop (*New Internationalist*, 1998). Another series of successful programs followed in the subsequent three decades including a second Literacy Campaign that eventually raised adult literacy levels to the Grade 9 level. Rural boarding schools were opened for middle years students where pupils spent half of their day studying and the other half of their day working in the fields. These "schools in the countryside" also provided impoverished students with clean clothing, school supplies, food, shelter, and medical attention in addition to free schooling (Eckstein, 1997).

Castro then turned his focus to post-secondary education. As with the Literacy Campaign, results were impressive. University populations increased from 19,000 in 1959 to 268,000 by 1986 due largely to free post-secondary education and guaranteed jobs for graduates (Eckstein, 1997). By the 1980s, Cuba boasted over 5 million university graduates for a population of 11 million (*New Internationalist*, 1998). High levels of achievement, especially in the area of medicine, helped Cuba develop an international reputation as an educational leader. Teachers and doctors were soon exported at no cost to countries requiring assistance.

Under Castro's rule, schools in Cuba began to take on the role of altering social norms. Teachers became educators not only of subject areas but also of a series of newly emerging social *mores*. Programs were established to foster an environment free of individualism and competition. Students were taught to work collectively by planting gardens. Manual labour, originally associated with black slavery and colonialism, was now viewed both as an important contribution to one's education and to the cause of the Revolution.

The new education system also engendered reform in other streams of society. Cuban youth became involved in meaningful student self-government. Cuban women's movements became active in the education of their children. Mass organizations, such as the Union of Tobacco Workers, began to make significant contributions to educational theory and practices as used in the schools (Lutjens, 1996). Within 30 years, biases based upon race, gender, and urban location that had plagued the nation's education system were virtually eliminated. Blacks, women, and rural students now were fully represented in all levels of education in Cuba with the greatest gains found at the post-secondary level (Lutjens, 1996).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the educational system continued to prosper. In the early 1990s, however, surface cracks were beginning to show. Criticism of the new system was viewed with hostility by party officials. Teachers who did not fully support revolutionary ideals were "weeded out." Students who did not back the revolutionary cause were denied entrance into university (Eckstein, 1997). Librarians demonstrated for the right of freedom of information. A "repressive intellectual atmosphere" and "unsettling militarism in organization" (Lutjens, 1996, p. 204) based upon rampant censorship prevailed.

Throughout the 1980s, the Cuban government experienced difficulty in providing jobs for its highly educated populace. Educational expenditures for those bound for university became difficult to justify. The Cuban government reacted by reducing university entrance quotas and by expanding technical education programs throughout the nation (Lutjens, 1996).

In 1991, the fall of the Soviet Union caused severe damage both to the educational and economic vitality of Cuba. In what is euphemistically labeled the "Special Period," Cuba immediately plunged into a 10-year economic depression. These "conditions of war during peacetime" affected every aspect of Cuban society. With the loss of the country's primary trading partner, resources and funding for education became scarce. Financial concerns arising from the ever-tightening American embargo further cemented the country's economic difficulties (*New Internationalist*, 1998). What were once fully functioning schools in the 1980s now became "shells of buildings lacking water, power, and basic school supplies" (*New Internationalist*, 1998, p. 28).

> Teachers began in unprecedented numbers either to absent themselves from work or to abandon their jobs altogether. . . . Teachers absented themselves to tend to increasingly time-consuming daily chores, such as standing in shopping and bus queues. Teachers lost interest in their state jobs under the circumstances. Desertion rates were so high that teacher shortages arose in key subjects.
> (Eckstein, 1997, p. 7)

A new curriculum, rapidly rewritten after the demise of the Soviet Union, further complicated educational issues (Eckstein, 1997).

Throughout my data collection, I observed that education in the first decade of 21st century is faring better than in the preceding decade. While teachers are still suffering from shortages of transportation and food, they do appear to be returning to the classroom. While facilities and supplies would be considered well below par by Canadian standards, programs seem to be maintaining extremely high levels of achievement.

Technical advances, in the form of televisions and computers, are now evident at all levels of Cuban education. Improvements and additions to existing structures abound. Increased economic support appears to be fueling many new projects and programs. New pedagogical practices, in step with those being introduced into Canadian schools, are prevalent.

Despite severe restrictions, the Cuban education system of 2003 still appears to be one of the most remarkable in Latin America. The exportation of quality graduates in the fields of medicine, computers, and technology alone seems to affirm this notion. In the mind of this researcher, the most severe restriction upon Cuban education today appears not to be related to funding or supplies. The most debilitating factor influencing Cuban education appears to be the overt biases of the United States against the Cuban nation. Until these biases are unveiled and understood, a true international understanding of Cuba's unique education system will not be possible.

> The Cuban educational system. . . offers the world a striking façade of modernity. The Revolution has made education accessible to all and has given new attention to technology and to the practical uses of education. But, on the other hand, one cannot applaud the undoing of the liberal arts and the liberal spirit. In its emphasis on authority, in its dogmatism and intellectual hermeticism, the revolution seems quite retrograde, even ancient. This is the central paradox of Cuba's educational revolution. In some ways we [the United States] do not know the Cuban system very well. . . (Gumbert, 1988, pp. 136,137)

History of Musical Culture in Cuba

Figure 5: A collection of colourfully dressed Afro-Cuban dancers waiting to begin a parade in the Vedado district of Havana.

Introduction

Cuban music has an "intriguing, dynamic, and fascinating 400 year history" (Vega, 2002, p. 1). Whereas some may argue that certain Cuban musical traditions have virtually been ignored by academia, a significant portion of Cuban musical history has already been written. Comprehensive documentation of Cuban musical traditions can be readily located, both in Spanish and in English translation. The following brief review outlines the major factors and trends influencing the development of musical culture in Cuba throughout the past four centuries.

Cuban Culture Prior to the Revolution

On Oct. 27, 1492, on the eastern shores of *Oriente* province, Christopher Columbus officially "discovered" Cuba. Searching for direct access to the lucrative spice islands as well as new sources of silver to finance their royal treasuries, the Spanish arrived in America to "serve God and His Majesty and also to get riches" (Galeano,1997, p. 12). The Catholic church, financially decimated after nearly eight centuries of Holy War against Islam and the Moors, had needed "no prompting to provide a halo for the conquest of unknown lands across the ocean" (Galeano, 1997, p. 1). Soon the "expansion of the kingdom of Castile extended God's reign over the earth" (Galeano, 1997, p. 1).

The myth of El Dorado, the golden king, seeped into European consciousness and beginning in 1511, Spanish colonials from throughout the Iberian peninsula began their migration to Cuba (Rodriguez & Garcia, 1989). On the island, the Iberians encountered the tribes of the Siboney and Taino (Delgado, 2001). Prior to the arrival of the Castilians, these indigenous peoples had been living a primitive, community-based existence.

Music, dance, singing, and pantomime were important aspects of daily life for the Siboney and Taino. *Ariétos*, social celebrations involving tribal histories, magical rites, festivals, and funerals, dominated their cultural expression. Instruments, such as conch shells and drums fashioned out of the precious woods found on the island, mirrored those found in neighbouring indigenous populations (Rodriguez & Garcia, 1989).

The Spanish *conquistadores*, with their feudal economic formation, and the aboriginal inhabitants, with their communal orientations, soon clashed vigorously. By 1592, the result was an almost complete annihilation of the indigenous population along with their culture and traditions (Delgado, 2001). Today they number but in the hundreds and almost no influence of indigenous culture and musical traditions can be seen in contemporary Cuban society.

Arriving first in Barbados in 1641 and in Cuba in 1650, the sugar industry soon became the mainstay and eventual controller of the Caribbean economy (Galeano, 1997). By 1762, under British rule, Cuba's economy became completely "shaped by the foreign need for sugar" (Galeano, 1997, p. 67) and the sugar industry.

> . . . absorbed everything, men and land. To the mills went shipyard and foundry workers and the countless small artisans who had contributed decisively to the development of industry. Small peasants growing tobacco in the *vegas* or fruit in the orchards, victims now of the cane fields' brutally destructive advance, also turned to sugar production. Extensive planting relentlessly reduced the soil's fertility; sugar mill towers multiplied in the Cuban countryside and each one needed more and more land. Fire devoured tobacco *vegas*, forests, and pasturelands. . . The sugar cane invasion sent the best virgin forests up in smoke. . . and also, in the long run, [brought] the death of the island's fabulous fertility. (Galeano, 1997, p. 68)

The sugar industry required vast numbers of seasonal workers and the Spanish plantation owners turned to slavery to provide their labour force. Commencing in 1515, Spain began importing slaves to Cuba (Delgado, 2001) with the largest migrational waves of forced laborers arriving in 1762 while Cuba was briefly under British rule (Galeano, 1997). By 1811, 320,000 Africans lived in Cuba and accounted for 54% of Cuba's inhabitants (Moore, 1995).

Like the Spaniards, the Africans arriving on the slave boats came from a wide economic, social, political, and ethnic range (Rodríguez & García, 1989). Though the majority had set sail from what is now Benin, their origins were varied and included tribes such as *lucumí* and *carabalí* from throughout Western Africa (Rodríguez & García, 1989). Slowly, the displaced slaves began to mix their various African tribal traditions with the dominant Spanish culture.

Some of the earliest Afro-Cuban cultural traditions arose in *cabildos* or *cofradas*. These lodge-type associations were encouraged both by the Spanish authorities and the Catholic church. By allowing the various Africans to group themselves according to tribe or country of origin, the slave owner could hinder mass organization and slave revolt (Delgado, 2001). *Cabildos* also eased the transition of new members into society and ensured indoctrination into the Catholic religion. In addition, the *cofradas* also preserved African history and cultural traditions while serving as a structured social outlet (Delgado, 2001).

The first *cofradas*, organized as early as 1598 in Havana, centered their activities on music and dance with many of their festivals patterned after medieval Spanish fiestas. (Cuba's contemporary *carnevales* can be traced directly back to these slave organizations.) The most extravagant of the early festivals were for Twelfth Night or

King's Day celebrations of January Sixth (Delgado, 2001). On this feast day, blacks were given an almost unlimited liberty in their activities. For 24 hours slaves were given an opportunity to escape the tortured reality of their often 20 hour work day by parading in the streets, singing their tribal songs, and beating their unique African rhythms (Delgado, 2001).

Tribal music from Africa differed greatly from Spanish music. The most identifiable characteristics of African music included an emphasis on communal participation, hierarchically organized pitched drum ensembles, and sophisticated degrees of rhythmic development. As well, tribal music was characterised by an alternating between solo voice and chorus, melodic drum patterns, polymeter, repetition, and ostinato (Moore, 1995).

In contrast, Spanish music imported to Cuba primarily followed European models focusing on harmonic and melodic elements as opposed to rhythmic elements. The first Cuban compositions, attributed to Esteban Salas (1725-1803) and Juan Paris (1759-1845), greatly emulated the styles of Palestrina, Lasso, and Handel (Vega, 2002). In the eastern province of *Oriente*, the influence of Rameau and the French school was also imported by slaves and land owners fleeing from the Haitian Revolution (Vega, 2002). This French influence, primarily in the form of *contradanzas*, ultimately developed into the 20th century Afro-Cuban genres of *danzón*, *son*, and *salsa*.

During the 19th century, cultural development evolved rapidly. Fueled by an inspiration for independence, a battle against slavery and a struggle against colonialism, the country's unique musical heritage began to take form (Schwartz, 1979). Cuba's first internationally renowned instrumentalists began touring the globe and Cuban composers began to create enormous collections of songs. During this century, Cuba's first music publishing houses were established by Juan Federico Edelmann (1795-1848) and Anselmo López (Rodriguez & García, 1989). The foundations for the *danzones, sones, boleros, guajiras, guarachas, pregones, sones montunos, guaguancós, cha chas, mambos, rumbas, congas* and *tango congos* of the early 20th century were soon established (Vega, 2002). Unfortunately, relatively few 19th century Cuban composers crossed the boundaries between art music, generally associated with the Spanish, and popular music, generally associated with the African nations.

Not only a period of cultural development, the 19th century also signaled the abolishment of slavery in Cuba. Beginning in 1870, as free men, blacks were able to choose their own professions. Many blacks turned to music as a source of income as it provided a reputable profession that allowed them to scale the social ladder. Whites, who had a wider range of professions made available to them, did not consider the profession of musician enviable due to its inherent instability and poverty (Carpentier, 2001).

The ranks of black musicians grew and by 1840 blacks constituted the majority of professional musicians in Cuba. "Blacks played and created predominantly white music without enriching it further except with their atavistic rhythmic sense" (Carpentier, 2001, p. 163). In due time, the culture developed so that the "arts in Cuba became secured in the hands of people of color" (Carpentier, 2001, p. 153).

Beginning in the late 19th century, in spite of the resistance of the white dominant classes, black cultural elements slowly became integrated with the traditions of Iberian music (Casal, 1989). At first, acceptance of black traditions were met with extreme distaste and fear by the white population. Regrettably, these anti-black sentiments continued throughout the beginning of the 20th century.

At the dawn of the 20th century in Cuba, the white middle class viewed Afro-Cuban artistic expression as a potential threat to national culture. While blacks were allowed to play in dance bands for white audiences, black *rumba* and carnival activities were curtailed. *Cofradas* and *cabildos*, many with a history of over 100 years, were forbidden to celebrate King's Day (Delgado, 2001). By 1922, all gatherings involving drumming and dancing, both religious and nonreligious, were also banned (Delgado, 2001).

Ironically, this attempt to "disinfect" the population of Cuba from the "menace of black look and culture" (Delgado, 2001, p. 106) was also the inspiration for the *Afrocubanismo* movement. In the early 1900s, Fernando Ortiz Fernandez (1881-1969), a pioneer of Afro-Cuban studies, became the first to document African musical traditions in Cuba. Initially wanting to understand and help to diminish the criminal elements in blacks (Delgado, 2001), Fernandez started to research religious and cultural activities as practiced by Cubans of African descent. Decades later, Fernandez realized the error of his ways and slowly transformed himself into a sympathizer of the new *Afrocubanismo* movement.

Both increased trade and anti-American sentiments had been developing throughout Cuba during the preceding decades. By 1850, though still under Spanish rule, one third of all Cuban trade involved the United States (Galeano, 1997). By 1895, Cuba was buying and selling more to her American neighbour than to her imperial ruler -- Spain (Milbrandt, 2002). Though Cuba's economy still relied upon the monoculture of sugar, the Americans expanded their hold upon the country to include the exploitation of mineral deposits and other subsoil wealth (Galeano, 1997).

American desire to assert political control over Cuba had been a permanent feature of Cuba-United States relations since the early 19th century (Milbrandt, 2002). Driven by the determination of the United States to preserve as much political control over Cuba as possible, American political and economic involvement in Cuba became increasingly important (Milbrandt, 2002). By the turn of the century, the United States virtually controlled all sectors of agriculture, cattle ranching, mining, transportation, utilities, and banking in the Caribbean nation (Bethell, 1993).

When the island finally gained her independence from Spain, Cuba was left "exhausted, weak and vulnerable" (Bethel, 1993, p. 57). What originally began as armed intervention by the United States led to military occupation and "eventually reduced Cuban independence to a mere formality" (Bethel, 1993, p. 576). The Platt Amendment of the Cuban Constitution of May 1902 "denied Cuba treaty-making authority, established limits on the national debt and sanctioned North American intervention for the . . . protection of life, property and individual liberty" (Bethell, 1993, p. 57).

By the beginning of the 1920s, American investment in Cuba exceeded $200 million. "North American manufactured goods saturated the Cuban market and hindered the development of local competition. Many firms could not compete with United States manufacturers and business failures increased" (Bethell, 1993, p. 58). Ultimately, the whole island of Cuba and its monoculture of sugar passed into the hands of citizens of the United States (Galeano, 1997).

The 1920s have been described as the period of transition in Cuban cultural development (Delgado, 2001). The rapid development of Cuban nationalism combined with growing anti-American sentiments resulted in a decade that can best be described as tumultuous. A major ideological shift surfaced in the Cuban intelligencia in this decade and later spread throughout the entire nation (Moore, 1995). Fueled by poverty, a dramatic deflation of sugar prices, and rampant unemployment due to the seasonal nature of the sugar industry, this ideological divergence had long-lasting effects upon the history of culture in Cuba.

The resulting anti-American sentiments as found in the 1920s manifested themselves in Cuba's national identity and culture. Within two decades, public attitudes towards Afro-Cuban music changed dramatically. African genres moved from being illegal to gaining overwhelming acceptance within mainstream society (Delgado, 2001). Intellectual and cultural works now sought to define "Cubanness," and Cuban intellectuals started to embrace Cuban historical and popular cultures. Cuban composers also started to cross the boundaries between art and popular music (Delgado, 2001).

A fused or "syncretised" form of Cuban music, combining toned down or "whitened" elements of African traditions, popular music, and art music, gained unprecedented acceptance both nationally and globally. Composers such as Roig (1890-1970) and Lecuona (1895-1963) began incorporating Cuban rhythms and melodies into their compositions (Vega, 2002). Cervantes, Grenet, Matamoros, Moré, and Pérez Prado began introducing the world to the *bolero*, *son*, and *conga*. The *rumba* craze of the 1930s, extravagant cabaret shows, salon music, the jazz age, even Bernstein and Hollywood all became influenced by Afro-Cuban musical elements. What was accepted abroad eventually came to be accepted at home and by the end of the 1940s, Afro-Cuban culture now defined the very essence of Cubanness. *Cubanismo*, now an overwhelming source of national pride, became the identifiable culture of both Cuban blacks and whites alike.

Figure 6: A young music student practicing her violin in the the hallway of her school.

When Fidel Castro took office in Havana on January 1, 1959, he and his revolutionaries inherited an education system in tatters. In the realm of culture, however, the *Sierra Maestra* guerrillas gained control over a rich and vibrant Afro-Cuban legacy.

Though this culture had been "whitened" so as to be accepted by all Cuban citizens, *Afrocubanismo* had solidly taken hold of the newly independent nation. With visionary leadership akin to that he displayed while leading the Literacy Campaign, Castro began to develop creative policies that served to dramatically improve all aspects of Afro-Cuban culture.

According to Fidel and the Moncadistas, building a revolutionary culture meant encouraging artists, writers, filmmakers, photographers, actors, and dancers to be as creative as possible. At the same time, building a revolutionary culture meant that artists were to be accountable to society, a responsibility that many both accepted and embraced as part of their art (Levinson, 1989). In revolutionary Cuba, artists were to develop their talents not for personal glorification but rather for the benefit of the masses and the cause of the Revolution (Schwartz, 1979).

According to the revolutionaries, policies regarding the arts were not to remain static. Cultural policy was to vary according to the needs of the Revolution, and artists and writers were to have the right to participate in the formulation and adoption of policies regarding culture (Schwartz, 1979). Though some artists originally suffered from prejudice, either because they were homosexuals or seen as insufficiently serious about their responsibilities with the Revolution, the Cuban government eventually accepted artists as being "different." Today, Cuban cultural life "flourishes in a context where it is accepted that artists are 'different,' and that their very difference enriches Cuban society" (Levinson, 1989, p. 490).

Prior to 1959, only 100 libraries and six museums were available to the Cuban public (Schwartz, 1987). The revolutionary process, *el proceso*, altered all aspects of Cuban society and turned Cuba into a land where "cultural institutions and activities occupy a disproportionately large space in a country of 10 million" (Levinson, 1989, p. 488). By providing the Cuban people with basic needs and alternative forms of employment, the Revolution enabled remarkable expansion in the arts. This effect was most noted in the black, female, and rural populations (Levinson, 1989).

The commitment of the revolutionary government to culture was immediately evident upon their takeover of power. Beginning in 1959, art and music were integrated with the school curriculum. Soon, along with universal literacy training, the Revolution came to mean universal arts education, free music lessons, and free use of musical instruments. Those who had been unable to receive arts training under the capitalist system were now able to take advantage of free instruction. The result was a huge emergence of talent in a nation that already knew the value of the arts and, most especially, the value of music.

Prior to this new ideological takeover, music had primarily been learned from family or *cabildo* members on an aural/oral basis in the black communities. In the white communities, wealthy urbanites populated the various private music conservatories throughout the county. With Castro's new cultural policies, the Revolution enabled talented musicians from all geographical, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds equal access to quality musical training.

Castro's innovation of cultural policies continued. In 1961, a National School of Arts was established at the secondary school level and branches were opened in all provinces in order to accommodate peasants, workers, and farmers (Schwartz, 1979). In 1978, the Superior Institute of the Arts (*el ISA*) opened in Havana to train professional musicians. The National Dance Ensemble, the National Theater Ensemble, the National

Folklore Ensemble, and the National Ballet all were established within 10 years of the revolutionary takeover (Schwartz, 1979).

In 1961, the National Direction of Music was established to provide administration for Cuban symphony orchestras and chamber groups. In the early 1960s, the Ministry of Culture (*MINCULT*) was established to "execute and control the application of cultural, artistic and literary policy of the state and the government" (Robbins, 1990, p. 48). Unlike earlier decades where black culture had been adapted for white audiences, Afro-Cuban cultural activities of the 1960s were now encouraged to return to their pure and unadulterated form free of cultural "whitening."

Positive affects of Castro's new policies were quickly evident. In a report to the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (*PCO*) in 1975, party members concluded that, among the advances of the Revolution in culture, three bore particular attention. These were: (a) participation of the masses in cultural activities, (b) the re-evaluation of the most important works of Cuban art and literature, and (c) the study of Cuban cultural roots (Robbins, 1990). The report of the Second Congress of the *PCO* in 1980 further stated that the work undertaken augmenting the influence of Cuban music among the youth and the population in general also warranted special merit (Robbins, 1990).

With a new constitution that legislated access to music, drama, literature, dance, and the visual arts for all Cubans, participation rapidly increased. By 1989, Cuba boasted 2,000 libraries and over 250 museums as well as six symphony orchestras, 12 professional choirs, an active film industry, and numerous international festivals of theater, jazz, ballet, guitar, popular music, and modern dance (Levinson, 1989).

Other developments by the Castro government relating to culture included the opening of the Center for Research and Development of Music (*CIDMUC*) in 1978

(Robbins, 1990). The center soon attracted prominent musicologists from throughout the nation. Expanding upon the legacy of Fernandez, *CIDMUC* developed an extensive collection of research which is currently available to both Cuban and foreign academics.

A system of over 200 *Casas de Cultura* offering workshops in dance, theater, art, and music was also established throughout the country by the revolutionary government. Along with these cultural centers, a national movement of musical contests was introduced. Created to foster interest and excellence among amateur musicians, the competitions still continue to attract workers, students, and *campesinos* nationwide (Robbins, 1990). *Casas de Cultura* eventually expanded their role to include early childhood musical training along with classes for senior citizens.

State control over the accreditation and hiring of musicians was established in Cuba in the early 1960s (Moore, 1995). Beginning in 1978, however, professional musicians in Cuba now became members of their own union named the *Sindicato de Trabajadores Culturales* (Cultural Workers Union). This syndicate served to protect both musician and consumer in the newly nationalized folklore industry. The syndicate also enabled self-leadership for musicians, and many artists welcomed this change of cultural policy.

Indeed, the life of a musician in revolutionary Cuba became one of the most prized. Job security (due to state control), high salaries (determined by a state audition), and opportunities for foreign travel attracted even the white population to the traditionally black-dominated profession of musician. In contemporary Cuba, these same three factors continue to inspire many to seek employment in the music industry.

Unlike under the capitalist system, a state-salaried musician or a musician working in auto-financed enterprises (*e.g.*, restaurants, tourist centers) was now assured more than adequate remuneration for his/her efforts. Though musicians' salaries were and still do remain higher than those of doctors or scientists, musicians in the New Republic are simply considered to be workers. The system of "star status" as seen throughout the globe essentially does not exist in contemporary Cuban arts culture.

One of the finest positions a musician could aspire to under the new system was to teach, and the expansion of music education into the school system provided many opportunities for musicians to enter the classroom. Teaching music in the new Cuban Republic was restricted only to skilled artists. As a result, the majority of teachers involved in music education also had contracts as performers. Many musicians fulfilled their state duty, a two-year commitment, by teaching rather than serving in the army (Robbins, 1990). Musicians who were asked to tour with a performing group were further allowed to subcontract substitute teachers into their teaching positions for a period of up to one year (Robbins, 1990). Thus a music education system in revolutionary Cuba developed where a delineation between "music educator" and "music performer" was not as polarized, and workers could easily serve in both capacities.

The rapid expansion of Cuban cultural activities in the 1960s continued through to the end of the 1980s. By the 1990s, however, though education was seen by some as the most successful arena in which music had been developed, both Cuban intellectuals and music teachers were prone to criticize the general cultural level of the masses (Robbins, 1990). Specifically, music education was criticized for being too narrow in its focus.

The lack of attention paid to *música folclórica* (folkloric music) and popular music were among the two most prominent areas of concern. Music literacy was also largely being ignored in Cuban music education. This lack of attention to literacy was attributed to the primarily oral/aural Afro-Cuban music traditions found throughout the nation

(Robbins, 1990). The country's preference for *música bailable* or dance music also concerned Cuban music teachers and musicians.

Cuban music and music education experienced opposing histories throughout the "Special Period" and the resulting economic hardship of the 1990s. With the development of the tourism industry beginning in 1990, musicians found increased opportunities to perform in hotel cabarets, dance clubs, and restaurants. Even at national league baseball games, one could find two or even three performing ensembles. Cultural activities such as festivals and conventions also expanded throughout this decade.

In the field of music education, a lack of supplies in the form of instruments, printed music, and accessories (*e.g.*, drum sticks, woodwind key pads, ligatures), wreaked havoc upon the system throughout the 1990s. Unfortunately, this lack of supplies continues to plague contemporary music education in Cuba.

Unlike the general teaching population who abandoned their posts during this decade due to economic concerns, music teachers were supplementing their incomes through performance and were able to maintain their positions. The quality of services in music education therefore remained high throughout the 1990s in Cuba despite severe restrictions in obtaining necessary supplies.

The current status of Cuban musical culture is one of ever-increasing global proportions. Attributed largely to the desire of tourists to experience true Afro-Cuban culture, interest in Cuban music has spread worldwide. Within Cuba, state and community support for music and other arts-related activities is thriving. In Santiago de Cuba, for example, the *Festival de la Trova*, the *Festival de Bolero*, and the *Festival de Son* now fill city streets with live musicians, tourists, and festival-goers nearly year round. *Carneval*, a week-long activity, highlights the musical successes of the various *cabildos* and *cofradas* from Santiago neighbourhoods. Congresses focusing on Afro-Cuban music or *Nueva Trova*, the New Troubadour movement originating in the 1960s with Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés, also abound.

These musical developments, combined with related activities in the other arts, enable increasing amounts of foreign dollars to enter the Cuban economy. Once a country solely dependent upon sugar, Cuba has diversified its economy to such a degree that culture and tourism have now become one of the country's most important sources of revenue. Despite this increased revenue, Cuba of the 21st century is still classified as a "Developing Nation."

For the ethnographic researcher studying music education in contemporary Cuba, the country's educational and cultural heritage continually provides a source of intrigue. Whereas supplies such as drumsticks and flute pads remain sorely needed, the skill levels of Cuban students never cease to amaze the knowledgeable visitor. Whereas the increased economic sanctions by the United States against the Cuban government have made printed music a highly coveted commodity, the unceasing dedication of Cuban music instructors can be described as no less than inspirational.

Be it the advanced sight singing or rhythmic reading skills of Cuban music students, be it the original arrangements by Cuban music educators unable to obtain printed music, Cuban music education always fascinates the foreign visitor. In a country where each new generation of musicians appears to be ever younger and yet even more talented, the Canadian music educator can be immersed in new ideologies and philosophies.

Glossary

a lo cubano:	in the Cuban way or manner.
Afro-Cuban:	of Cuban nationality but of African heritage.
cabildo:	Afro-Cuban musical organization; see *cofrada.*
carabalí:	West African tribe whose members were imported to Cuba to work as slaves in the sugarcane fields.
Casa de Cultura:	literally "house of culture"; a government-sponsored program where amateur Cuban musicians and artists can receive training at no cost; frequently housed in large, colonial mansions nationwide. Programs from pre-school through to senior are available to all Cuban residents.
círculo infantil:	Cuban system of pre-school training; often housed in *Casas de Cultura.*
cofrada:	literally "brotherhood"; a Cuban term used to identify guilds or organizations of African slaves. Slaves were divided into these brotherhoods by country of origin in order to eliminate the possibility of uprisings. The organizations also served to protect African culture and tradition through the celebration of music and dance.
conga:	"style of Cuban carnival music frequently involving a line or parade of dancers" (Cuban Music 101, 2002, p. 2).

conciencia socialista:	literally “socialist consciousness”; a key concept of the Revolution that has been translated as “an amalgam of consciousness, conscience, conscientiousness, and commitment. Also used interchangeably with “New Socialist Man” (González, 1997, p. 8).
Cubanismo:	a cultural movement in Cuba beginning in the 1920s celebrating Afro-Cuban traditions.
danzón:	“style of music influenced by French *contradanzas* first developed in the late 19th century. The form was later expanded to contain a section initially known as *nuevo ritmo,* later called *mambo*; forerunner of *son”* (Cuban Music 101, 2002, p. 2).
en la calle:	literally “in the street”; music lessons received outside of conservatories or music schools are described as lessons *en la calle.*
guajiro:	a Cuban term for peasant or person from the country.
lucumí:	a Cuban term generally used to identify Cuban descendants of the West African Yoruba population brought to the island to serve as slaves.
Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio:	literally the “July 26 Revolutionary Movement” or forerunner to the Cuban Revolution. The name of the movement marks the date of Castro’s first attack upon the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953.

North America:	for purposes of this document, North America refers to the English-speaking countries of Canada and the United States of America.
Nueva Trova:	literally "New Troubadour"; a movement of popular music beginning in the 1960s drawing from three major sources: old *trova*, 1960s protest songs, and *Filin* (Feeling); pioneers of the style included Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés.
Oriente:	the Easternmost part of Cuba, including the provinces of Las Tunas, Granma, Holguín, Santiago, and Guantánamo.
peso:	Cuban unit of money; 28 Cuban pesos equal $1.00 U.S.
rumba:	"secular Afro-Cuban dance form consisting of drumming, dancing, and call-and-response singing both in African and Spanish languages" (Cuban Music 101, 2002, p. 1).
salsa:	literally "sauce"; general term given to contemporary popular dance music of a *Latino* orientation; more specifically, a form of Cuban dance music whose roots can be traced back to *son* and *danzón*.
secondary school education:	in Cuba, elementary school education corresponds to the Canadian equivalent of Grades 1 through 6. Secondary school education corresponds to the equivalent of Grades 7 through 10. Post-secondary training begins after this period and can vary in duration. Cuban students must fulfill a two-year commitment to the state which may involve military training. Many students fulfill this commitment prior to entering post-secondary education.

son:	"style of popular dance music originating in the *Oriente* province of Cuba; roots of *son* can be traced back to French *contradanzas* as imported by slaves and landowners fleeing the Haitian Revolution" (Cuban Music 101, 2002, p. 1).

CHAPTER 3: FIELDWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Figure 7: A view of downtown Santiago as seen from the window of the *la Banda* rehearsal hall. In the background, the Sierra Maestra mountains.

Preparation for Fieldwork

Numerous factors caused me to select Santiago de Cuba, the birthplace of *danzón*, *son,* and *rumba*, as the location for my study. First, as a center that promotes Cuban culture, Santiago de Cuba is considered to be the second most important city in Cuba.

Only *La Habana*, the capital, rates higher. Second, despite its population of close to 500,000, Santiago de Cuba easily allows a researcher to experience a wide variety of cultural activities in a relatively small geographical area. Third, Santiago de Cuba's cultural heritage, which dates back almost to the arrival of Columbus, is unique in that it draws equally from both the Iberian and African traditions that have joined or syncretised to form contemporary Cuban culture (Robbins, 1990).

Along with being recognized for its cultural importance, Santiago de Cuba is recognized for its revolutionary importance. National heroes such as the four Maceo brothers, 19th century Cuban independence fighters, claim Santiago as their mother city. The *Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio* (the July 26 Revolutionary Movement), so named after the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks, took place here. Without the overcrowded and overpriced conditions of Havana, Santiago de Cuba provides the ethnographic researcher with an accessible setting to study the *conciencia socialista* (socialist consciousness) and the cultural richness of Cuba.

For my entrance to the field as an ethnographic researcher, I engaged in comprehensive preparations. My efforts included active involvement in research focusing on the nature of reform in education, extensive reading relating to the Cuban education system, volunteer work at the University of Alberta International Center, participation in Cuban cultural activities, and training in ethnographic methodology. These activities, combined with advanced study of the Spanish language, provided me with a rich framework in which to complete my research.

Introduction to Methodology

This work is the product of three extended trips to Santiago de Cuba. The first, a pilot study, took place from January 15 until April 28, 2002 under the auspices of the Augustana-in-Cuba Project, Augustana University College, Camrose, Alberta. The primary focus of the pilot study was to establish working relationships with possible participants as well as to acquaint myself with the people and culture of Cuba. At this time, I also enrolled in extensive Spanish language courses at the *Universidad de Oriente*, Santiago de Cuba, in order to gain a better working knowledge of Cuban Spanish.

Data collection for the study began in the spring of 2003. From February 1, 2003 until March 28, 2003, I was engaged in fieldwork in Santiago de Cuba. In April, I returned to Canada in order to gain perspective on my study by distancing myself from the field setting. The final trip for data collection occurred from May 1 until June 25, 2003. Though the majority of my time was spent in the city of Santiago, I was traveled to a variety of other Cuban communities including Havana, Baracoa, Las Tunas, and numerous towns and villages in the vicinity of Santiago. These voyages were undertaken in order to obtain similar information from a variety of sources for purposes of triangulation.

My fieldwork was based upon methodology as outlined by Jackson (1987) and Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995). I modeled my activities in the field based on their concepts relating to the practical, mechanical, ethical, and theoretical aspects of data collection. I consistently employed these techniques in the pilot study and in both phases of field studies.

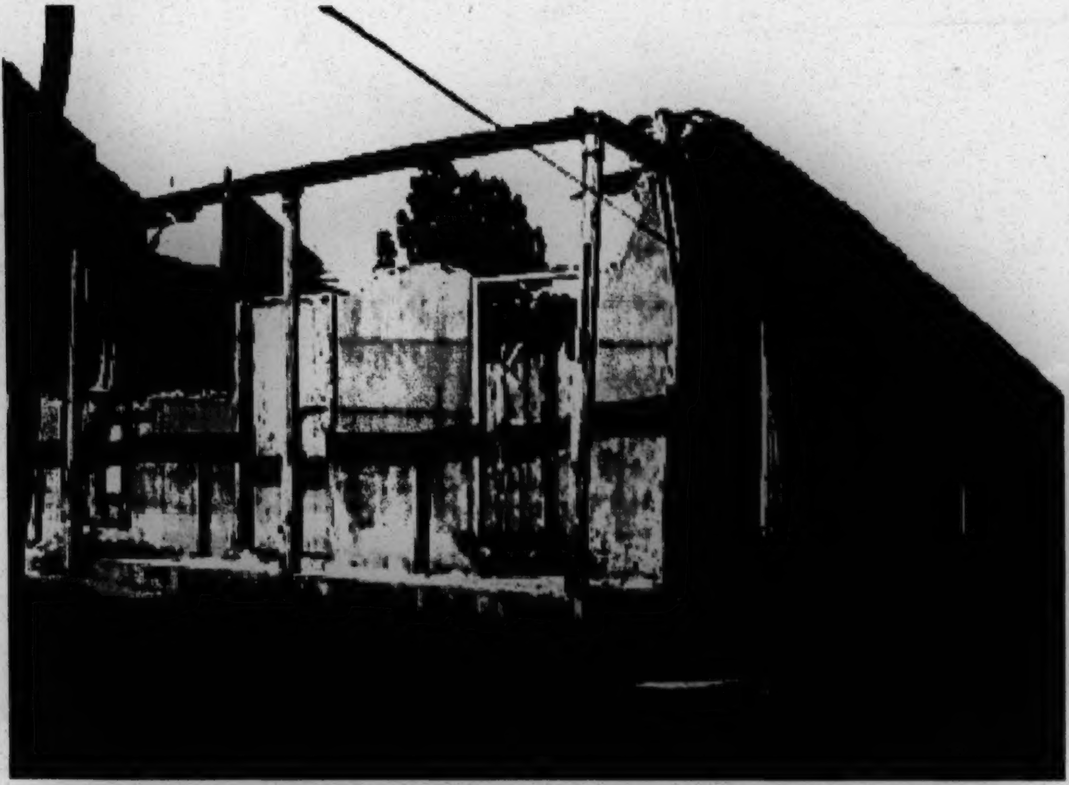

Figure 8: The remains, in downtown Santiago, of the former *Conservatorio "Esteban Salas"* (*CES*) percussion building, slated for reconstruction.

After a scathing report that appeared in the European press in 2002, highlighted by photos exposing Cuban schools to be in a state of decay and disrepair, the Cuban government closed school doors to casual visits by foreigners. Prior to 2002, visitors from abroad could freely enter the schools, take photographs, and exchange ideas with teachers and students. The Cuban government has now installed a strict policy prohibiting all foreign visitors from entering Cuban educational institutions unless they are issued authorisation by the Ministry of Education (*Ministerio de Educación* [*MINED*]) in Havana.

Even with this authorisation, beginning in 2002, Cuban educational institutions tended to allow foreign visitors to view only select, well-rehearsed presentations from their schools. Rarely did Cuban institutions permit foreign visitors to view the day-to-day activities of their educational system. A deep distrust of the unspoken personal goals of foreign visitors, especially those from the United States, fueled this policy. Therefore, in preparation for my data collection, I undertook a four month pilot study in Santiago de Cuba in order to establish the parameters of my research.

Being unfamiliar with bureaucratic policies regarding research and lacking confidence in my ability to work alone effectively as a researcher in Cuba, I elected to enroll in a pre-existing project in order to ease my entrance into Cuban society. I enrolled in the Augustana-in-Cuba Project in hopes that my association with an organized group could also assist me in my introduction into the education system in Cuba.

The Augustana-in-Cuba Project, sponsored by Augustana University College of Camrose, Alberta, consists of a semester abroad for undergraduate Arts and Science students in their second or third year of study at the college. If space permits, visiting students and interested adults may also enroll in the program. In the project, students participate in courses about the Spanish language, Cuban politics, Cuban history, and Cuban culture. Courses for the project are offered in Spanish, with simultaneous translation in English, by distinguished professors at the *Universidad de Oriente* in Santiago de Cuba.

Canadian students involved in the Augustana project are housed in either dormitories or private homes. In addition, numerous excursions are organized so that students can experience a wide range of historical, social, and cultural activities. The project also involves the participation of *Universidad de Oriente* English language students who provide translation services and act as cultural ambassadors. These English language students also participate in the excursions organized for the group and assist the Canadian students in the completion of their academic assignments.

I was a full participant in the Augustana-in-Cuba Project of 2002. I enrolled in two intensive Spanish language courses as well as auditing numerous classes relating to the politics, sociology, and ideology of Cuba. I participated in many of the organized excursions and established an excellent working relationship with many of the English language students. For three months, I lived with a Cuban family recommended by the Augustana project thereby exposing myself to the Cuban lifestyle.

In addition to my activities through the Augustana project, I began establishing contacts within the musical and educational communities of Santiago de Cuba in order to lay the groundwork for my study. My Cuban family, their friends, and neighbours, as well as the various other Cuban families housing Augustana students, assisted me in making contact with these two communities.

As I began to understand the workings of Cuban society, I found that I needed to maintain two parallel paths, one official and one unofficial, in order to immerse myself in the educational and musical communities. The official path proved to be largely ineffective. Thankfully, the unofficial path, or the path involving "friends of friends," proved effective. This, I later learned, was a fundamental characteristic of Cuban culture: through friends and acquaintances, and not through official party-sanctioned organizations and policies, are Cubans able to obtain what they need in order to survive in contemporary Cuban society.

My official path leading into the musical and educational communities involved many frustrating hours. In order to visit any Cuban office (*e.g.*, *Ministerio de Cultura*

[MINCULT]), an appointment would first have to be made for me by a Cuban citizen. If my Cuban representative was fortunate enough to secure an appointment, I would then be escorted to the appropriate office where I would be introduced to the appropriate *funcionario*. Often, although my Spanish verbal skills were strong, the Cuban official would continue to address my representative and not myself throughout the course of the meeting. Even more often, my representative and I would be told that this office did not deal with my type of request. Politely, I would then be directed to set up an appointment with a different office. This bureaucratic treadmill became so convoluted that, by the end of my pilot study, I had endured at least six similar situations.

In all of these meetings with administrators, I was treated with polite respect. This said, after several visits to numerous administrative offices, I began to believe that as a white female from a developed nation, most officials saw me as nothing more than a curious "tourist" and not as a serious academic.

Tourism is a very important industry in Cuba with Santiago being one of the top tourist destinations in the country. From September until March, foreign tourists, primarily from Canada and Europe, fill the hotels, restaurants, and cultural centres of the city. Tourists generally come to Santiago on one-day excursions connected to a cruise or packaged resort holiday or are independent travelers stopping in the area for a few days. Administrators were quick to place me in the same category though with a bit of variation. I was perceived a foreigner who, instead of coming to Cuba for the sun, sand, and salsa, had come as a tourist to see classes, clarinets, and congas.

As such a foreign "tourist," I was treated with caution and was subject to unforeseen bureaucratic barriers. For example, on one occasion, I was waiting to talk with the principal of a school prior to receiving authorisation to enter the school building. The school was anxiously awaiting the tour of an American group so I was told to remain waiting in the lobby. Shortly thereafter, Luís, the *funcionario* from the Provincial Department of Education International Relations Office (*Relaciones Internacionales, Dirección Provincial de Educación* [DPE]) with whom I had been dealing with for several months, entered the room. I was rather surprised by his reaction. Luís did not invite me to join the group that was about to receive a complete tour of the facility nor did he acknowledge my presence.

I quickly decided to take matters into my own hands and began to make friends with the Americans in the group. Being fellow educators, they invited me to join them. Shortly thereafter, the principal, in her opening speech to the visitors, warmly stated that the doors of the school were open to anyone who wished to come in and observe the work that they were doing there. I laughed at the irony of my situation.

I had been waiting for months to be allowed to enter a classroom and now the principal was welcoming this group as if foreigners were regularly allowed in her facility. I simply smiled and joined the group. Luís never did acknowledge my presence throughout the two-hour tour. Ironically, it was Luís who so warmly welcomed me the following year when I went to apply again for authorisation to enter the schools.

Finally, after three months of work, in April, as a result of pursuing this official pathway, I was granted authorisation to enter Cuban schools in order to complete my pilot study. My official permission, sanctioned by the Minister of Education in Havana, allowed me three days to visit three pre-approved educational institutions. These three schools consisted of a pre-university level school (*Escuela Preuniversitario "Cuqui Bosch Soto"*), a fine arts school (*la Escuela Vocacional de Artes* [*la EVA*]), and *Escuela de Instructores de Artes "Pepito Tey"* (*Pepito Tey*), a school for future social workers. With such a short time frame, I was able to enter two of these schools (*EP "Cuqui Bosch Soto"* and *la EVA*) but not *Pepito Tey*.

My visits to these two schools were highly regulated. Each minute of my visit was supervised and, in both schools, an administrator ushered me from room to room, often staying with me throughout the lessons. At the pre-university level school, I was treated like a visiting celebrity -- students stood and saluted me when I entered the room. I saw only ideal teaching situations.

In talking with the English language students involved with the Augustana project, I came to realize that the school situations that I was being exposed to were not the daily reality of the Cuban education system. As I was to learn later, the realistic situations of teachers slapping pupils or of unruly, disrespectful student behavior would never be exposed to or even discussed with a foreign visitor.

Indeed, though several participants told me that some of their teachers slapped students in class, this subject is never acknowledged on an official basis, even to Cubans. For example, my house mother, Yolanda, in her work as a school psychologist, was barred by the Ministry of Public Health (*Ministerio de Salud Pública* [*MINSAP*]) from developing a project to assist teachers in dealing with their anger and frustration in the workplace. By allowing such a project to exist, the government would have had to admit that teachers were mistreating students. The Cuban government was not prepared to acknowledge this reality on a public level and canceled the project.

On the unofficial side of the spectrum, I was amazed at how the web of informal connections functions so well in Cuba. Through an acquaintance of an acquaintance, through the friend of a friend, the bureaucratic doors are soon opened even to a foreigner.

Once my credibility as being a serious and trustworthy person was established, I was amazed by the connections that my Cuban family and friends established for me.

Three primary sources proved to be indispensable in helping me secure contacts in the musical and educational communities in Santiago de Cuba. My Cuban family, the owners of the *casa* (house) where I was living, and their friends were an excellent source. Yolanda, my house mother and a retired school psychologist, was an excellent resource person. Yolanda's close friends and neighbours also assisted with my research project, making special trips to my residence to introduce me to prospective study participants. In addition to Yolanda and her friends, the professors and English language students involved in the Augustana project at the *Universidad de Oriente* connected me with suitable participants.

It was through this unofficial pathway that I was introduced to the majority of the participants who would later become involved in my study. Through the help of friends and relatives, I was able to interview a professor of elementary music education who taught at the Santiago Pedagogical University (*Instituto Superior Pedagógico "Frank País García"*). I was able to take drum lessons from a noted teacher at the *nivel médio* or secondary level conservatory and piano lessons from a graduate of the esteemed *Instituto Superior de Artes* (*el ISA*), the highest level of music education available in Cuba.

By means of unofficial channels, I was able to interview full-time musicians and teachers about their working and living conditions. I was able to visit and establish contacts within the primary and secondary music conservatories as well as the fine arts school. I observed lessons taught by master pedagogues, I interviewed symphony orchestra members and participated in a professional concert band, a professional concert choir, and a senior citizen community choir. In addition, I was also able to establish contacts in the cities of Havana, Las Tunas, Baracoa, and numerous other Cuban communities. My exposure to these varied activities and participants served well for triangulation purposes in that it provided a wide range of sources from which I could obtain similar data.

Through the introduction of friends and my Cuban host family, I was also allowed to enter into various Cuban educational institutions on an unofficial basis. Once past the *concierge*, I found the teachers and employees to be intrigued by my research and very willing to discuss the realities of their life situations. In these instances, I was left unchaperoned to talk with any teacher or student.

Unlike their administrative counterparts, the contacts that I made through these unofficial means treated me as a serious academic. Many were willing to spend much time in informal interview situations. Severe travel restrictions on Cuban nationals combined with the natural openness and hospitality of the Cuban people make foreigners very intriguing to the Cuban population. Any opportunity to come in contact with the "outside" world is enthusiastically approached.

It is notable that on all my visits to Cuban schools, both official and unofficial, I was repeatedly instructed not to bring any type of recording device, including a camera. I therefore made a conscious decision to arrive empty handed for these visits. The few occasions when I was allowed to photograph students on school property were official festival days (*e.g.*, the birthday of José Martí) when regular classroom activities were suspended.

In contrast, I found that when a foreign visitor is not on school property, video and audio recording is quite *de rigeur*. A foreigner, with video or audio device in hand, can easily mount the stage during any type of cultural performance. Flash photography is allowed in almost any performance setting. I therefore made arrangements to meet many of my contacts at locations away from school property.

I was able to conduct both formal and informal interviews with many of these potential participants. Interestingly, upon initial meeting, the majority of these potential research participants shunned the use of any recording device. Potential participants simply wanted to converse and become acquainted with the nature of the study prior to any official record keeping. After an initial meeting, potential participants, though they still expressed their disdain, were generally willing to be recorded. As a result, the majority of data collected in the pilot study exists in the traditional form of field notes.

Field Studies: Phase 1: February 1-March 28; Phase 2: May 1-June 25, 2003

Figure 9: A typical post-Revolutionary Cuban home similar to that in which the researcher lived during her field studies. Construction is of cinder block and concrete.

On February 1, 2003, I returned to Santiago de Cuba to begin my data collection. I had maintained contact, via e-mail, with several prospective participants so was confident of a relatively seamless re-introduction into the musical and educational communities of Santiago. I had also arranged, with the assistance of a local musical instrument repair shop, to return to Cuba with much needed supplies for local music students and teachers.

As a result of completing my pilot study, I decided to make multiple trips to Cuba for my field studies. My reason for doing so was based upon Robbins's (1990) ethnographic study of musical life in Santiago in which he states that "the time between multiple trips allowed me to digest material and focus research more efficiently. . . and it also allowed me to demonstrate continued interest in informants and fulfill minor requests for items not easily available in Cuba (p. 23)." I envisioned a similar situation for myself.

I therefore filled my suitcase with items donated by The Wind Shoppe, an Edmonton-based instrument repair company. Donations included drumsticks; clarinet and saxophone reeds; clarinet and saxophone ligatures; trumpet, trombone, clarinet and saxophone mouthpieces; replacement cork; valve oil; key oil; slide grease; flute pads; pencils; manuscript paper; and printed music. All of these supplies were later given to needy Cuban musicians, teachers, and music students.

As a result of the extensive connections that I had made through the Augustana-in-Cuba Project 2002, I felt confident in my ability to complete my fieldwork in 2003. I remained in contact with the English language students and teachers at the *Universidad de Oriente* as well as the 2003 participants from Augustana throughout my field studies in Cuba. Frequently, I participated in the excursions and cultural activities associated with the 2003 project.

For my field studies, I was housed in the same *casa* that I had lived in for the Augustana project. Rather than Yolanda and her family, I was now under the care of Carmen and Carlos, current managers of this bed-and-breakfast-style establishment. This couple proved to be indispensable in their assistance with my research.

Carmen, a former *MINSAP* psychologist who had worked extensively in Santiago schools, quickly assumed the role of my representative. In the first days of my field studies, Carmen made use of her connections to telephone high-level administrators in the *DPE*. Her concerted efforts expedited my official entry into several Cuban educational institutions.

Carmen's husband, Carlos, a former employee at *DPE* and currently *jefe* (boss) of a large national corporation, provided excellent insight into the economic, educational, and cultural policies of the island nation. The friends, neighbours, and family who visited Carmen and Carlos on a daily basis provided further assistance such that, without having to leave my home, I was able to have questions answered and resources found.

Upon arriving in Cuba for my field studies, I reinstated myself on both the official and unofficial pathways to join the musical and educational communities of Santiago. Again, the unofficial route, via friends and their families, proved the most fruitful. In 2003, I was surprised to experience only minor difficulties in obtaining government approval to complete my fieldwork. I was quickly recognized as a serious researcher and minimal running from office to office was needed in order to obtain my authorisation.

I quickly re-established a connection with Luís from International Relations at *DPE* in Santiago and arranged to meet him at his office in the Moncada Barracks complex. Upon arrival, I was pleased that this *funcionario* had remembered me from the previous year and I was warmly received. After leaving my résumé and a two-page research proposal with this department, I was assured that my authorisation would be rapidly approved thereby allowing me access to the schools that I had selected for inclusion in the study.

The Office of International Relations is housed in the Moncada Barracks, the site of Fidel Castro's first attempt to overthrow the Cuban government on July 26, 1953. This site now houses numerous provincial education offices as well as an elementary school. A museum, displaying the still-bloodied uniforms of the revolutionaries, is also found on the property. The museum commemorates the 1953 battle and ensuing court case, during which Fidel Castro gave his famous "History Will Absolve Me" speech. Most striking on this site are the bullet holes that had once been plastered over but had been recently reinstated on the barracks walls -- a reminder of the struggle of the Revolution, a struggle that, according to Castro, continues to this day.

I established contact, via Carmen, with the national office of *MINCULT* and the *Centro Nacional de Escuelas de Artes* (*CNEART*) in Havana in order to be approved for entrance into the various music conservatories in Santiago. I sent a copy of my research proposal to this office. Later, as requested by the department, I sent a list of potential questions for participants in the study.

In keeping with Cuban policy, where emphasis is placed on the aural/oral as opposed to written tradition, I did not receive written acknowledgment from either *MINED* or *MINCULT* with respect to my authorisation to enter their institutions. Both departments simply telephoned my home to state that I had received Ministry approval.

MINCULT approved my application within one week. Their only concern was my statement that participants were to remain anonymous. "Why, if this was supposedly a legitimate research project, would I want the participants to remain anonymous?" they inquired. Upon the explanation that I wanted to have participants remain anonymous for ethical reasons in order to protect them from possible negative consequences, they quickly approved my authorisation to enter the two *nivel básico* and one *nivel médio* music conservatories in Santiago. I was allowed full access to these institutions for an unlimited amount of time. I was granted full recording and video/photo taking priviledges.

MINED, via *DPE*, attempted to telephone me at my home to state that I had been granted approval to enter their schools. Unable to contact anyone at the residence (few if any Cuban homes have telephone answering machines), they abandoned the matter. Weeks later, already well established through unofficial means as a teacher/observer in one of their schools, I telephoned their office to inquire about the status of my application. Shocked, they stated that my approval had been granted weeks prior and that the appropriate schools had been notified. Ironically, all parties involved, except me, knew that my application had been accepted. As with *MINCULT*, I was granted unlimited access to my selected schools, again with full recording and video/photo taking priviledges.

Within a week of arriving in Santiago, I had established a regular schedule that I adhered to throughout the months of February and March. My mornings were divided between writing field notes and administrative duties relating to my research. From February 13 until February 28, I also spent mornings playing flute in the *Banda de Música Municipal, Santiago de Cuba* (*la Banda*), a professional concert band that rehearsed on Mondays-Fridays from 9:00 until 11:30 a.m. For four weeks, I attended two rehearsals per week with the group and performed in one concert. Many of the band members were also music educators in the various conservatories and fine arts schools and assisted me with gaining access to the educational community. I also arranged several interviews and meetings in the morning hours with participants in the study.

From February 17 until March 19, I spent Monday through Thursday from 12:30 until 5:00 p.m. at *la EVA,* the *nivel básico* (Grades 1 through 9) fine arts school in Santiago. The flute teacher, Rosa, one of the two female members of *la Banda*, graciously allowed me into her classroom and convinced school officials to let me enter the school several weeks prior to my receiving authorisation from *MINED*.

At *la EVA*, I participated in a wide range of activities. I observed a variety of classes and rehearsals, taught students and accompanied performers in school recitals. In addition, I attended midterm exams and prepared students for auditions. I also interviewed teachers, student teachers, students, administrators, and parents, and recorded school events using video, photo, and audio devices.

In the evenings, I immersed myself in the musical and educational communities of Santiago. From February 15 until March 23, I received flute lessons from the primary flute teacher, Pedro Torres, at the *nivel médio* conservatory *Conservatorio "Esteban Salas"* (*CES*). A twenty-year-plus veteran of both the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente* (*OSO*) and *CES*, Pedro proved to be an invaluable resource. Along with twice-weekly flute lessons at my home, Pedro also agreed to numerous formal and informal interviews. Through my work with Pedro, I was able to establish a working relationship with *CES* and its teachers.

In addition, from February 6 until March 18, I began giving twice-weekly flute lessons to Ana Diaz. I had met Ana and her family the previous year; not only were they neighbours but they also had housed one of the Augustana-in-Cuba 2002 students. I quickly established a rapport with the Diaz family. It was agreed that in return for free tutoring for Ana, a third-year flute student of Rosa's at *la EVA*, I would be permitted to record our lessons as well as interview both Ana and her mother in regards to their attitudes and experiences with the Cuban music education system. My interviews, both formal and informal, with the Diaz family further provided me with further insight regarding the economic and social conditions of urban professionals and their children in Cuba.

Finally, several evening and weekends were spent attending the numerous concerts and cultural offerings in the community of Santiago. Accompanied by Augustana students, *Universidad de Oriente* English language students and professors, Cuban friends and neighbours, I ventured into the concert halls, night clubs, cultural centers, and tourist-oriented locations in Santiago and its surrounding communities.

My schedule for Phase 2 of my field studies, May 1-June 25, followed a similar but slightly varied order. For this second set of field studies, I continued to fill my mornings with writing field notes and attending to administrative duties such as scheduling appointments. I no longer attended rehearsals with *la Banda* as they were rehearsing for an upcoming tour to France in June. Nor was I fortunate enough to have flute lessons with Pedro, he too having several proposed tours scheduled for the months of May and June. I did, however, continue to practice the *danzones* that we had worked on in our lessons in February and March.

During Phase 2 of my field studies, I spent the majority of my afternoons at the *nivel médio* conservatory *CES* where Pedro teaches. Unlike during Phase 1 of my field studies, I had no administrative hurdles to overcome and I freely walked into the *conservatorio* on my first day after identifying myself to the *concierge* at the door. Again, as I had done at *la EVA*, I quickly immersed myself in a wide range of activities at the school. From May 16 until June 17, I spent the majority of my afternoons at this conservatory arriving at 1:00 p.m. and leaving at 5:00 p.m.

My range of experiences at *CES* included observing teachers in the areas of flute performance, percussion performance, choral, instrumental ensemble, sight singing, ear training, and theory. I also observed final exams in many of these areas. I attended numerous auditions for potential students as well as recitals performed by graduating students. I interviewed, both formally and informally, students, teachers, administrators, and parents regarding their experiences with the conservatory and the music education system in Cuba. Using photo, video, and audio devices, I also recorded several school events both on and off campus.

In the evenings, I again took the opportunity to attend the numerous cultural events offered in Santiago de Cuba. I continued my twice-weekly lessons with Ana from May 7 until June 16, which was well after her final exam for *la EVA*. With the same agreement that I had established with the Diaz family involving free lessons in return for formal and informal interviews, I added a second student to my roster. Diana, a first-year student of Rosa's at *la EVA*, came for twice-weekly lessons from May 21 until her final exam on June 6. Again, I spent many evenings and weekends attending concerts and cultural activities in the Santiago area accompanied by friends. As in Phase 1 of my field studies, I also spent some weekends travelling to other towns and cities within Cuba.

Figure 10: The researcher helping a new friend transport building material.

Throughout both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of my field studies, I found that my identity as an ethnographic researcher took on several distinct characteristics. Many participants in the study perceived me to be a teacher/researcher who was not only wanting to investigate Cuban schools but was also willing to inform Cubans of the existing music education system in Canada. Music teachers and music students were most likely to perceive of me in this manner.

Professional musicians whom I met in performing situations, both in Santiago and throughout the country, perceived me primarily as a "*una turista muy séria*" or a "serious tourist." For others, I was perceived as a flute player interested in playing Cuban music. For yet others, I was hailed as a sure source of hard-to-obtain musical supplies and an avid supporter of Cuban musicians and music students.

Throughout my field studies, I also found myself to be perceived as a possible connection to help Cubans travel abroad. Many professional musicians, once they learned of my work, took the opportunity to ask me to assist them in arranging tours abroad. Many gave me résumés, video tapes, and sound recordings to help promote their musical groups.

Perhaps the manner in which I was most frequently perceived was simply as a rich, available female from a developed country. Never did I become accustomed to this daily onslaught of potential suitors. Some pursuers professed to want to teach me Spanish, others salsa dancing, others simply wanted to buy me coffee, flowers, or lunch. Marriage proposals were not infrequent even at an initial meeting.

This perception was more inconvenient and annoying than it was useful. On some occasions, however, this perception did prove profitable in terms of data collection, especially in informal settings such as concert halls and commercial music venues. This perception was especially useful in cities other than Santiago where I was not familiar with the local music and education communities.

Consent Forms

In adherence to the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation (FOIPP) and to ethics regulations as outlined by the University of Alberta, participants and/or their parent/guardian were asked to complete a written consent form. By completing this form, participants allowed the researcher to include their images and/or words in the final document. Participants were informed of the opportunity to remain anonymous and/or to discontinue their involvement with the study at any time. All names used in the preparation of this document are pseudonyms. An English translation of the consent form is found in Appendix A.

Participants in the study can be separated into three distinct categories. The largest group of participants consists of students, teachers, and administrators from the schools selected for the study as well as their extended families, friends and neighbours. The second group of participants consists of the English language students at the *Universidad de Oriente* and their extended families, friends, and neighbours. The third group consists of the members of my household, my Cuban family, and their extended family, friends, and neighbours.

It is not uncommon to have three generations of a Cuban family living in the same household. A shortage of housing combined with a poor economy is often the reason. In addition, extended family members such as aunts, uncles, and cousins, often live nearby and visit frequently.

Further, Cuban culture is a walking culture. Few families have cars and public transportation is frustrating. The warm tropical climate often forces Cuban citizens to seek escape from their stiflingly hot homes by pouring out into the streets. As a result, daily life in Cuba is lived outside, and extended family members, friends, and neighbours are all seen on a daily basis. These three social groups therefore play an important role in the daily life of any Cuban household.

Sources

Written Sources

All of the written materials used in this work are publicly available. Though most of the Cuban publications are available only in Spanish, several are also published in English translation. Spanish book prices in Cuba are extremely low for foreigners. English book prices appear equivalent to those found in continental North America. Cuban newspapers and magazines are readily available from street kiosks or book stores for a nominal price.

Most Cuban written materials used for this work were "gifted" or donated by friends and/or participants in the study (*e.g.*, school textbooks). Some materials, such as Cuban choral music, were bought directly from the composers. Ironically, one of the Cuban composers was not even aware of where his published works could be bought. Other materials such as reference texts were bought in Santiago and Havana book stores. On other occasions, sections of books were simply photocopied or written out by hand and given to me by participants. I was unable to locate any store in Cuba that specialized in printed music.

It must be noted that non-locally printed materials are extremely difficult to obtain in Cuba. If these materials can be found, their costs generally are prohibitive for the average Cuban. Throughout the duration of both my pilot study and my field studies, rarely did I see any original copies of printed music being used by students or teachers. Teachers would either photocopy or hand-copy music. Even in *la Banda*, the professional community concert band, I did not see any professionally printed music in their performance folder.

It must be noted that attitudes towards copyright in Cuba are diametrically opposed to those of North America. Cuba has not signed any international copyright agreements. The world is welcome to freely copy any materials published in Cuba. According to Castro, the ideas and concepts produced in Cuba should be globally available and at no cost.

In practice, Cuban musicians and educators believe the corollary of this statement to be true also. Music teachers photocopy written materials on a regular basis, seemingly without concern for international law. In reality, Cuban music educators simply cannot afford to buy published copies of the selections listed on their curriculum. Even if these educators did possess the money, these materials are not available in Cuba.

Oral and Visual Sources

Documentation of oral sources exists in four forms: (a) notes written by hand during interviews; (b) notes written by hand shortly after interviews; (c) notes typed following an interview, concert, or lessons; and (d) recorded interviews, concerts, and lessons. Documentation of visual sources exists in two forms: (a) video recordings, and (b) photographs.[1]

Note-Taking

Note-taking during interviews was generally used in situations where an administrator was giving factual information about an institution. Note-taking by hand shortly after interviews was used for informal interviews where it would have been culturally inappropriate to take notes during the session. Most of the data exist in the form of field notes. Field notes were typed on a Power Mac laptop computer on the day following an interview, concert, or lesson.

Mini-Disc Recordings

Using a Sony Recording MD Walkman MZ-R700 and stereo microphone (ECM-ZS90), a total of 12 Mini-Disc recordings were made. Of these 12 Mini-Discs, six were recorded on Sony MD74 discs, five on JVC MD74 discs, and one on a Maxell MD74 disc. Mini-Disc recording was used for collecting data in concert, lesson, and interview situations.

Video

Using a Sony Digital 700x Digital Handy Cam, a total of 14 video tapes were made throughout both phases of the field studies. Video was recorded on Fuji film P6-120 8 mm film. Recordings were made during public performance situations such as graduate recitals, concerts, and festivals of the various conservatories and schools. Twelve public performances of commercial music were also recorded.

Footage showing the physical layout and the surrounding neighbourhood of the schools involved in the study was taken. Limited recordings were made in the early stage of each phase of field studies that displayed the day-to-day activities of the various institutions. Once credibility had been established within each school, some lessons were recorded. No examinations were recorded in any of the educational facilities. Video recordings were also made of the two private flute students, Ana and Diana.

Photographic Recording

Photographic data were collected using both digital and traditional 35 mm SLR cameras. Digital photos were taken using the still-photo function of the Sony Digital 700x Digital Handy Cam. These photos were later transferred to compact disc (CD) for archival purposes. A total of 413 photos on two CDs (CD-1: 191 photos, CD 2: 222 photos) were taken.

Traditional 35 mm photographs were recorded using a Minolta XG-S SLR camera. A total of eight rolls of film photos were taken including one roll of Kodak Black and White (400 ASA), three rolls of Kodak Gold (200 ASA), one roll of Kodak Gold (400 ASA), and three rolls of Fuji (400 ASA). All film used was 24 exposures per roll.

Photographic images were used to recorded the physical layout of schools, including school entrances, classroom set up, and students and teachers in formal and informal settings. Photographic images were also used to record neighbourhoods of schools as well as homes of participants involved in the study. Images of buildings where various cultural activities are presented in Santiago de Cuba were also taken.

Translations

Spanish was the sole language employed for all interview, concert, and lesson situations. Whereas all video and audio recordings exist only in Spanish, all notes, both typed and hand written, exist in English. In order to ensure that translations were accurate, numerous informal interviews were held with the English language students and professors from the *Universidad de Oriente* throughout the duration of study.

During these lengthy interviews, the meanings of selected vocabulary and idiomatic expressions used by participants were discussed in detail. Suitable translations were then agreed upon by the English language students/professor and the researcher to ensure that the true nature of a Spanish statement was reflected in its corresponding English translation. These translation-based discussions were maintained throughout the duration of data collection to ensure that all documents consistently read in an authentic manner. At the recommendation of the English language students and professors, the inverted syntax of the Spanish language was not maintained and translations were adapted for ease of reading in English.

Analysis of the Data

Analysis of the data gathered for the study subscribes to current practices within the research domain of ethnography. Experts in the areas of ethnomusicology, ethnography and hermeneutics have been consulted on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that the methods used were current and valid.

CHAPTER 4: MUSIC EDUCATION IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA

Figure 11: The *Escuela de Música Lauro Fuentes*, a *nivel básico* conservatory located in downtown Santiago.

An Overview of the Organizational Structure

Introduction

Formal music education, in the form of private music conservatories, existed in Cuba long before the Revolution of January 1, 1959. Prior to the Revolution, the opportunity to take music lessons at a conservatory was generally limited to the wealthy white population. Piano lessons were considered to be a staple for white Cuban children. In smaller centers, where conservatories were not available, lessons were given by a neighbour or relative. Both conservatory and private music lessons for white Cuban children focused on the Western European Art Music (WEAM) tradition.

Prior to the Revolution, the teaching of music within the black populations primarily took place through the *cabildos* or community organizations. These organizations, many dating back over 100 years, passed on their music knowledge via aural/oral means. Their music, unlike WEAM studied at the conservatories, consisted primarily of percussion accompaniment for Carnival parades or for religious ceremonies associated with the syncretic religions of Cuba (*e.g.*, *Santería*).

Some blacks learned to play instruments other than percussion, with guitar being one of the favourites. Most blacks acquired their skills "*en la calle*" or in the street. By observing and copying instrumentalists as they played, a tradition also found in the roots of jazz history, many blacks became proficient at various woodwind, brass, and stringed instruments.

The current system of music education in Cuba is primarily a construct of post-Revolutionary policies. During the 1960s, Castro and the Moncadistas established a public education system that included free music education. With a vibrant musical culture alive within both the black and white populations of Cuba, the post-Revolutionary policy of free music instruction was enthusiastically welcomed. Students were primed for formal music education and the new system established high standards for its students.

In contemporary Cuba, students have access to formal music education from pre-school years to retirement age. Classes are free at all levels. The music education system consists of two streams: (a) the General Stream, which provides music education for the general school population, and (b) the Specialized Stream, which provides music education for students who wish to become music professionals. The two streams are organized as follows.

General Stream Music Education

From pre-school to Grade 7, Cuban students receive compulsory music education training as part of the regular school day. Pre-school music education is provided in the *círculos infantiles*, or day-care style facilities that are provided free to all Cuban children. Students can receive up to three years of music training prior to entering elementary school.

Elementary music education is theoretically provided in all schools from Grades 1 through 6. Music education at this level is compulsory for all students, however a teacher shortage has resulted in some schools being unable to offer music at all grade levels. Classes are participatory in nature and involve singing, music games, movement, and some elementary instrumental training. As in pre-school music education, the courses follow a nationalized curriculum established by *MINED* in Havana.

Compulsory music education in Cuba ends in Grade 7. Unlike the participatory music classes offered in elementary school, Grade 7 music in Cuba is a music appreciation course. The focus is primarily on Cuban music and, again, the curriculum has been developed on a national level. A shortage of teachers has caused difficulties in the delivery of this course. In response to this teacher shortage, *MINED* makes a radio broadcast of the course available throughout the country.

From Grade 8 upwards, no formal music education exists for Cuban students in the General Stream. Music activity groups, offered on an extra-curricular basis, are available at most junior high and high schools. Community organizations such as the *Casa de Cultura*, the *Casa de África*, or the *Casa de las Américas* play an integral role in music education outside of the school system.

The Cuban system of community centers, to which *Casa de Cultura*, the *Casa de África*, and the *Casa de las Américas* belong, is a major provider of music education for both the youth and adult populations of Cuba. Musicians, of either professional or amateur musical status, can become actively involved in these nationally organized community centers.

The goal of the *Casa* system is to promote all facets of Cuban culture by providing opportunities for Cuban citizens to be involved in cultural activities. While each *Casa* has an individual mandate (*e.g.*, *Casa de África*: promoting the African roots of Cuban culture), all *Casas* allow Cuban citizens to be involved in a variety of activities such as performing groups, music seminars, and conferences.

The retired Cuban population has additional opportunities available. Cuban seniors may join a *Círculo de Abuelos* or Circle of Grandparents, a nationally organized system of interest groups for retirees. Many of these interest groups provide choral instruction for seniors along with opportunities to be involved in exercise programs and community service. All ages of the Cuban population, from youth to senior, can become musically active in their community *cabildo* or dance/music troupe.

Specialized Stream Music Education

By means of a highly structured audition procedure, Cuban students can enter into the Specialized Stream of music education. Two types of schools exist in this stream: (a) conservatories and (b) fine arts schools. Unlike in the General Stream, the curriculum for the Specialized Stream is determined by *MINCULT* in Havana. Cuban fine arts schools are governed by the *MINED* while Cuban conservatories are governed by *MINCULT*. Both follow the music curriculum as established by *MINCULT*.

Conservatories

Conservatories in Cuba are divided into three levels or *niveles*. The elementary level or *nivel básico* conservatories consist of two streams: the Long Stream and the Regular Stream. Students in the Long Stream audition in the spring of Grade 2 in order to enter into the conservatory in the fall of Grade 3. Students interested in pursuing piano or any of the stringed instruments are auditioned for the Long Stream. Students wishing to major in woodwind, brass, percussion, guitar, or voice audition in the spring of Grade 4 in order to enter into the conservatory in the fall of Grade 5. All students remain at the *nivel básico* until Grade 9.

Formal documents use the term "*nivel elemental*" for this level. Throughout data collection, teachers and students used the term "*nivel básico*" in their everyday language to delineate this level of education. For this reason, the term *nivel básico* will be used in this document.

At the end of Grade 9, and upon successful completion of a final exam or *pase de nivel* (passing of the level), students can audition to enter the *nivel médio* or middle level conservatory. Places are few and competition is steep. Once accepted into the *nivel médio,* students must complete four years of training in order to pass to the next level, *nivel superior.* In addition to offering specializations in instrumental music, students at the *nivel médio* can select choral conducting or theory/*solféo* (ear training) as a major.

All provinces in Cuba have both *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* conservatories. While some of these conservatories offer regular matriculation subjects (*e.g.*, *CES*), other conservatories only offer music-related courses (*e.g.*, *Escuela de Música "Lauro Fuentes"* [*EMLF*]). Conservatories offering only music subjects generally offer their courses in the afternoons as students attend regular schools in the mornings.

Nivel superior, the equivalent of university level music training, consists of five years of training at one of the two superior level conservatories located in the cities of Camagüey and Havana. Again, a *pase de nivel* or passing of the level exam must be completed in order to be accepted into these two schools. Because of an extremely limited number of available spaces, competition is fierce and only very gifted musicians are accepted into the programs at this level. In addition to the specializations offered at the *nivel médio,* students can also elect to major in composition/arranging, and orchestra directing.

Students who graduate from the *nivel médio* conservatories are considered to be professional musicians. With a *nivel médio* certificate, students can be employed as teachers at the *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* levels as well as as be employed as professional musicians (*e.g.*, symphony orchestra members, professional concert band members). Students graduating from the *nivel superior* can teach at all three levels of the conservatory system; however, *nivel superior* graduates are often destined for high profile international playing careers.

When space is available, adult students are accepted into all levels of the conservatory system in Cuba. So too are older students (*i.e.*, students wishing to begin an instrument later than Grade 5) allowed to audition for the conservatories. It is not uncommon to see adolescent or adult students in classes with young children at the *nivel básico* conservatories. I did not see any adult students at the *nivel médio* conservatory in Santiago.

A special upgrading or *superación* program is also available for adult students. In Santiago, this conservatory for adults is located across the street from the *nivel médio* conservatory. Often teachers work for both the *superación* and *nivel médio* conservatories.

Superación students are music professionals who want to improve their playing. Many of these professionals received their training *en la calle* or from private teachers. Individualized programs, based upon the national curriculum, are devised for *superación* students that best benefit their professional needs while eliminating gaps in their music preparation.

Fine Arts Schools

Fine arts schools are a fairly recent development in Cuban music education with *la EVA* in Santiago de Cuba dating from 1986. Falling under the governance of *MINED*, fine arts schools are fully functioning schools offering core course subjects along with the full complement of music courses as offered at the conservatories. Fine arts schools allow for majors in music, dance, and art though not all schools will offer all three streams.

Prospective students at the fine arts schools are involved in a similar audition process to that of the conservatories. Again, places are coveted. Unlike at the conservatories, where students of all ages are accepted into the program, students auditioning for the fine arts schools must enter into the program at the appropriate grade level. For example, a student may not begin study of the flute in Grade 7 at a fine arts school, but may only begin studies in Grade 5. If a student wishes to learn an instrument beginning at the Grade 7 level, s/he must audition for one of the conservatories as s/he will not be accepted into the fine arts school.

As in the case of some conservatories, fine arts schools have residences or *becas* which enable students from throughout the province to attend. Extended weekends allow students to return to their homes each month. In Santiago de Cuba, *la EVA* shares its residences with students studying at *CES*.

An Overview of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Figure 12: A young music student completing her homework on the floor of an *aula*.

In order to provide a basic understanding of how curriculum and pedagogy function in the music institutions of Cuba, a more detailed description of the course offerings and workings of the formal music institutions follows. This material has been included in order to present a conceptual framework of the existing music education system. Rather than organizing this section by stream (General Stream and Specialized Stream), this section has been organized by age level (music education at the elementary level, music education at the secondary level) and community music education offerings.

In most Canadian jurisdictions, Grade 7 upwards is considered to be secondary education. Though *nivel básico* includes Grades 3 to 9, this level of instruction has been included in the secondary music education section because the majority of students in *nivel básico* are in Grades 5 to 9. Further, a description of the curriculum and ideology of *superación* courses has not been included as few if any of these activities appear to have a direct effect on secondary music education in Cuba. For this same reason, a detailed description of courses offered for adult and retired Cubans has not been included as these courses appear to have a limited effect on secondary music education.

Elementary Music Education

Círculos Infantiles -- Pre-school Music Education

Music education at the preschool level in Cuba is organized on a national level with the curriculum for pre-school courses established by *MINED* in Havana. Lessons deal primarily with the concepts of singing, aural skills, and listening and, according to *MINED* guidelines, all lessons should contain aspects of these three concepts.

Materials used in pre-school music classes consist primarily of Cuban folk songs as well as folk songs from Spanish speaking countries. Students are involved in singing activities, games, and some limited percussion playing. Pre-school students are taught to identify and move to the major genres of Cuban music. Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches are primarily employed to teach students at this level.

There are some notable differences as to how these approaches are employed in Cuba as opposed to North America. For example, I did not come in contact with any Cuban elementary schools that owned the full complement of Orff instruments. Nor did I come in contact with any pre-schools or elementary schools that taught music literacy or note-reading skills. In addition, teachers and professors of pre-school music education that I contacted were not cognizant of the Curwen hand signals, an integral component of the Orff and Kodaly approaches.

In an interview with a Santiago pre-school music professor, I learned that music literacy is not considered to be an important skill for the general population. Cubans believe that music literacy skills should be reserved for students enrolled in the Specialist Stream. As a result, at no point in their formal music training do the General Stream students learn to read music. This skill is reserved for students wishing to become music professionals.

A movement to teach music literacy to the general population has recently begun to take root in Cuba. As of the end of Phase 2 of data collection, however, I was not aware of any elementary schools in Santiago that were teaching literacy skills. According to music teachers interviewed, the music literacy movement in Cuba may have serious implications on the future direction of pre-school and elementary music education in the country.

Prospective teachers of pre-school music in Cuba are trained at provincial *Universidades Pedagógicas* or Pedagogical Institutes (Teacher Training Institutes). All prospective pre-school and elementary teachers attending these institutes must receive musical training. According to a professor of pre-school and elementary education at the Santiago *Instituto Superior Pedagógico "Frank País García,"* the pedagogical concepts taught are "Cuban" in nature. Though students are trained in the concepts of Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze, methodology used in Cuban pre-school and elementary classrooms is "uniquely Cuban." When asked to define "uniquely Cuban," the professor had difficulty doing so and stated that the practices simply were "their own" or "in the Cuban manner."

Other notable characteristics are seen in the pedagogical practices taught to students at the *Instituto Superior Pedagógico*. A strong influence from Russia and the Eastern Bloc countries is found in Cuban music pedagogy. This influence however is most evident in materials used as opposed to concepts presented. Further, though rhythm is an integral part of the Afro-Cuban musical heritage, at the pre-school and elementary school level, a unique Cuban methodology for teaching rhythmic skills does not exist. Rhythmic skills are taught using techniques traditionally associated with Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches. I saw no evidence of knowledge of Suzuki methodology.

Elementary Music Classrooms

Music education in Cuban elementary music classrooms is a continuation of music education offered at the pre-school level. Pedagogical practices employed in elementary classrooms are similar to those used at the pre-school level and materials studied build upon those studied at the pre-school level. Student activities at the elementary level are a continuation of pre-school level student activities.

Along with formal music courses at the elementary school level, some elementary schools offer extra-curricular music activities. These activities can vary in nature but often consist of some form of vocal class. In some schools, students participate in a school choir, either directed by an interested teacher from the school or by a professional music educator (*e.g.*, a teacher from one of the conservatories). In other cases, extra-curricular music activities at the elementary level take the form of an interest group rather than a formally organized choir. Throughout the academic year, school-wide singing competitions often provide the impetus for the existence of such interest groups. Whereas some elementary schools do have small rhythm bands, there are no concert band programs in existence in Cuba at the elementary school level.

Like their pre-school counterparts, teachers of elementary music are trained at the Pedagogical Institute. Unlike pre-school music teachers, elementary teachers of music are not music specialists but are elementary generalists. Currently, all Cuban elementary teachers are responsible for teaching music to their own students.

Prospective elementary teachers receive three years of musical training throughout their five years at the Pedagogical Institute. In the first year of their training, students take classes in s*olféo* and general music literacy. In their second year, students take courses in music history and musical styles. To complete their training, in their third year students take courses in music methodology.

Unfortunately, some elementary schools are unable to provide musical training to their students due either to teacher shortages or a lack of teacher training. In addition, itinerant music specialists at the elementary school level are rare. In response to these concerns, a program to train music specialists for the elementary level has been developed on a national level. Music teachers and administrators that I interviewed believe that, within five years, all Cuban elementary schools will have trained music specialists working in their classrooms.

Secondary Music Education

Grade 7 Music Appreciation Course

The Grade 7 Music Appreciation course is a compulsory class for all students in Cuba. As with all other formal music education programs in the country, the curriculum for Grade 7 Music Appreciation is determined by *MINED*. The course focuses on teaching students to identify the various genres of Afro-Cuban music. Students are also exposed to Cuban composers of WEAM. In addition, students are introduced to the materials of music, including a basic understanding of musical instruments. An introduction to Cuban musical instruments (*e.g.*, *shékere*, etc.) is also included in the course.

Teachers of the Grade 7 Music Appreciation course are trained at the Pedagogical Institute. Due to insufficient funds or a lack of qualified teachers, several schools have been unable to obtain instructors for the course. As a result, an increasing number of schools take advantage of the national radio broadcast of the course. Students with whom I came in contact expressed a dislike for the radio broadcast format. Though they expressed a general liking for the course content, they preferred to have an instructor for the class.

Grade 7 Music Appreciation is the final obligatory music course taught to the General Stream in Cuba. After Grade 7, any student wishing to continue with formal music education must look outside of the regular school system. Formal music education after the Grade 7 level must be obtained at the government-sponsored conservatories, fine arts schools, and community organizations.

Regular Classroom Music in Grades 8 to 12

Music education of a formal nature is not offered in any regular stream Cuban secondary school after the Grade 7 level. The high school concert band, as found in many Canadian and American secondary schools, does not exist in Cuba. Secondary schools in Cuba do not offer formal curricular training in choral, guitar, strings, or general music. As in the elementary schools, however, extra-curricular music activities are often available to Cuban secondary students in the form of competitions and interest groups.

A strong tradition of celebrating the arts permeates the Cuban education system. This celebration generally manifests itself in the form of yearly arts festivals. From the elementary grades through the university level, annual festivals of the arts highlight the cultural skills of Cuban students. A series of competitions in poetry, dance, music, and art exist at all levels and schools highlight these competitions by showcase style *espectáculos* or concerts. Arts awards are presented to students at these *espectáculos* identifying students who have demonstrated excellence in the various arts. Festivals are offered from the individual school to the provincial and national level.

In order to participate in these annual festivals, Cuban students organize performing groups, write poems, choreograph dances, or create artwork. Generally, these activities are not organized by a supervising teacher but are student-initiated. The students with whom I came in contact eagerly awaited these annual competitions.

In addition to the school-sponsored arts festivals, a series of special interest groups, run by community volunteers, exist at the secondary school level in Cuba. The primary purpose of the interest groups, as established by the Revolutionary government, is to enable students to experience activities unavailable to them during regular classroom time. Government departments such as *MINSAP* and *MINCULT* send employees to the schools to work with students in these interest groups. It is the hope of the government that through participation in such groups, students can be guided into appropriate careers. Music is often included in secondary school interest groups in Cuba.

Nivel Básico Conservatories

Figure 13: Three music students sharing ideas in an *aula*. The girl in the center wears the gold and white uniform of secondary students while the girls on either side wear the red and white uniforms of elementary students. The red scarves indicate that the girls are members of the *Pioneros*, an organization for Cuban youth.

Curriculum and examination procedures.

Beginning in Grade 3 with piano and strings, and continuing with woodwind, brass, guitar, and voice in Grade 5, Cuban students can obtain specialized music education at the national system of *nivel básico* conservatories. As found in formal pre-school and elementary music education in the country, the curriculum for the *nivel básico* conservatories is determined by *MINCULT.*

Typically, students attend the conservatory two afternoons a week for a total of 8 to 10 hours. Normally, a student will follow either a Monday/Wednesday schedule or a Tuesday/Thursday schedule while teachers will provide instruction from Monday to Thursday inclusive. The school year consists of two semesters of approximately 18 weeks each beginning in September and ending in June.

Students enrolled at the *nivel básico* conservatories receive private instrumental instruction two times per week for a total of 100 minutes. In addition, students enroll in twice-weekly courses for private piano instruction until their graduation from this level in Grade 9.

For the first two years at the conservatory, students take a combined *solféo*/music theory course two times per week. Beginning in third year, this course is divided into two separate classes consisting of advanced sight singing/ear training and music theory. Again, these courses are offered two times per week in a group format.

In addition to sight singing, ear training, and music theory, *nivel básico* students also complete two years of music history instruction. Music history courses commence at the Grade 8 level with one year on the history of Cuban music and a second year on the history of WEAM. This class is offered in a group setting, typically twice per week for a total of 100 minutes. Vocal majors must take classes in choral conducting beginning at the Grade 8 level.

Conservatory students at the *nivel básico* level must participate in school ensembles. In years one and two, all students must sing in the conservatory choir. From year three upwards, students have the opportunity to either audition for the select chorus or participate in the numerous instrumental groups offered at the school. The nature of the specific instrumental groups can differ from conservatory to conservatory, depending upon the interests of the teachers. Typically, these ensembles include recorder ensemble, guitar ensemble, string orchestra, full orchestra, woodwind ensemble, brass ensemble, or ensemble of like instruments (*e.g.*, flute choir).

As found in the General Stream of music education, students enrolled in the Specialized Stream in Cuba are given the opportunity to participate in music festivals. These festivals are different in nature to those available for the general student population. Contrary to the repertoire performed by the General Stream student, which often is "non-classical" or more "popular" in nature, repertoire performed by the *nivel básico* student at festivals organized within the conservatory system consists of WEAM compositions or arrangements of Cuban folk songs.

Along with school, local, provincial, and national festivals organized specifically for the conservatory system, *nivel básico* students have additional opportunities to perform. These opportunities can vary from in-house concerts for parents to ensemble performances in public venues. Concerts showcasing the talents of conservatory students are organized for visiting international delegates interested in learning about the Cuban education system.

The national curriculum, as prepared by *MINCULT*, outlines the technical and musical requirements for students of all instruments. For the first five years of instruction, technical requirements are demanding. In addition to technical requirements, students are responsible for learning a series of études and solo repertoire. Students must additionally include a Cuban composition in their program of studies at the upper grade levels.

In the first year of instrumental studies, emphasis is placed upon developing good habits in terms of hand positions, posture, embouchure, breathing, and tone quality. Technical requirements include scales and arpeggios. Major scales are learned first with the corresponding relative minor scale immediately following. Students are required to learn études that focus on articulation, dynamics, tone development, and rhythm in keys corresponding to their scales. Pieces, including at least one Cuban composition, are selected from the approved list.

Second- and third-year instrumental studies continue in logical sequence from the first-year program. Emphasis is placed upon technical development and, by third-year, students are to have mastered all of the major, minor, and chromatic scales along with their corresponding arpeggios and dominant seventh chords. In addition, by the end of third-year, students are required to play scales through the entire range of their instrument. Upper-year studies continue in the same vein, being progressively more difficult each year.

The majority of technique/étude books for the *nivel básico* level are developed and printed in Cuba. Locally produced books consisting of compilations of solo repertoire are also employed. A variety of influences can be seen in these publications with composers ranging from well-known Cuban writers to composers typically associated with the canon of WEAM (*e.g.* Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach). A strong presence of composers from Eastern Bloc countries, especially Russia, is also found. For a complete listing of the curricular requirements for flute at the *nivel básico* level, see Appendix B.

According to teachers interviewed, the *nivel básico* curriculum is somewhat static in nature. One teacher at the *nivel básico* conservatory believed that there had been no changes in the course requirements in over 20 years. She was not aware of how changes to the curriculum could be made.

Curricular materials are theoretically available to all music students free of charge. Rarely did I see original printed copies of these materials. Étude and technique books for the individual instruments were more often than not poor photocopies, many with blurred sections and missing measures. At the younger grades, there appeared to be more original copies. I often saw students at the upper grades playing from poor photocopies or hand-written pages copied by either the teacher or student.

Some professionally printed curricular materials are used in the conservatories. Typically these materials consist of a limited number of method books, technique books, and music history texts. I did not observe students in possession of professionally printed sight singing or ear training books. Nor did I see students with professionally printed theory books. When I requested to see an official curriculum guide, more often that not, this was also a hand-written document.

In some conservatory storage rooms, I did see numerous English music books donated by various international organizations. In individual studios, instrumental teachers showed me copies of professionally printed music that had been donated to them by foreign musician friends. On other occasions, I saw copies of school materials being sold at outdoor book stalls in downtown Santiago. Teachers often told me that theft and re-sale of professionally printed materials was a concern.

Students have examinations in all subject areas at the conservatory three times per year. Examinations are held in the fall and winter culminating with a final exam at the end of the school year. For their instrumental exams, students must present material learned since their last reporting period.

Requirements for instrumental exams include at least one major scale (two in the upper grades), its relative minor, and corresponding arpeggios; at least two études, and a minimum of two solo pieces. Items to be played on the exam are chosen by the examining committee from a written list of works outlining what the student has completed throughout the semester.

Exams are held by department (woodwind, strings, brass) with like instruments from all grade levels being tested at the same time. All members of the department attend the exams with the department head serving as administrator and scribe. Examinations are unique in nature and warrant an in-depth description.

The examination process is as follows: the student is ushered into the examination room. The student's teacher presents the examination committee with the student's program of studies for the term, which is noted on the examination sheet. The department head then selects the technical requirements and pieces to be performed.

Once the student has completed the exam, s/he is ushered out and the members of the examination panel discuss the performance. Details outlining areas that have shown improvement and areas that are in need of further study are noted on the examination form. A consensus is reached among all panel members as to the mark for the student, which is then noted on the form. The next student is then asked to enter for his/her examination.

After all students from all grade levels playing the same instrument have completed their examinations, they are asked to return to the examination room for results. Often, students will have to wait several hours and parents frequently come to the school to sit with their children during this time. Many parents bring coffee and cookies to ease the wait. In front of their parents, peers, and the examination panel, students are told their marks and are read the comments on the examination form. A passing grade is set at 85%. A mark of 100% is not uncommon.

Examinations in piano, compulsory for all students, follow a similar format. Written examinations for music history and theory courses are held in group situations, and marks are made available to students once all students have completed exams. A similar procedure is followed for sight singing and *solféo* exams.

Teacher training and pedagogical practices.

All teachers at the *nivel básico* conservatories have completed musical training to at least the *nivel médio* level. Some teachers have completed training to the *nivel superior* level but they are few in number. In addition, a limited number of *nivel básico* teachers have attended the Pedagogical Institute after obtaining their *nivel médio* certificate.

Nivel básico teachers, like their *nivel médio* counterparts, work approximately 20 hours per week. Typically, they teach five 50-minute lessons per day from Monday to Thursday and are given Fridays to work on lesson preparation. *Solféo*, history, and theory instructors teach fewer hours per week than individual instrument teachers in order to account for their larger class sizes. Many teachers work as professional musicians outside of the conservatory.

The organizational system allows Cuban music teachers to be employed both as professional musicians and as educators. For example, large professional ensembles (*e.g.*, the symphony orchestra, the concert band, *Coro Madrigalista*) schedule their rehearsals in the mornings. In this manner, teachers can participate in these groups while being employed at the conservatories. Further, many teachers also work as musicians in nightclubs, bars, and tourist locations.

Music educators are allowed to take up to a maximum of a one year sabbatical from their teaching positions in order to tour with professional organizations. Upon their return, they are guaranteed their original post. Teachers take advantage of these playing sabbaticals but, more often than not, these sabbaticals are for periods of less than a year.

Some concerns do exist with respect to maintaining music teachers at the *nivel básico* conservatories in the Santiago area. The pull of artistic opportunities in Havana is great and talented musicians often leave to join choirs and orchestras in the nation's capital. The best, most talented players are often drawn to performing positions in the lucrative tourist industry. Due to these factors, it is not uncommon for teacher shortages to exist in some conservatories. For example, the *nivel básico* conservatory in Santiago, *EMLF*, does not offer flute instruction because a qualified teacher is not available. Nor can the school secure qualified cello, oboe, or bassoon teachers.

Young Cubans must complete two years of social service prior to their formal placement in the work world. A steady stream of music teachers is therefore available to the conservatories through this source. Teachers providing services through this program are all graduates of at least the *nivel médio* level. Workers have no control over their placements and are sent to locations in need of their services.

Theoretically, all students graduating from the *nivel médio* level are qualified to both perform and teach. I was not aware of any course offerings at the *nivel médio* level that focused solely on pedagogical practices. Some courses touch on pedagogical issues, but a course dealing specifically with music pedagogy is not taught.

This said, upper year *nivel médio* students are involved in two practica in order to prepare them for their professional careers. In third and fourth year, *nivel médio* students complete a one-semester practicum in a professional performing group (*e.g.*, the symphony orchestra) and in a teaching situation (*e.g.*, teaching students at the *nivel básico* level).

Student teachers with whom I came in contact primarily shadowed their mentor teachers. Some mentor teachers did provide valuable feedback to students but the practicum participants I interviewed never taught a complete lesson. I did not see a formal curriculum outlining what skills student teachers were to develop over the course of their practicum.

In talking with musicians and teachers, the primary pedagogical methods employed by Cuban teachers at the *nivel básico* conservatories appear to be the same pedagogical practices that the teachers experienced when they were students. More simply stated, teachers at this level, because they do not receive any formal instruction in pedagogy, tend to teach as they were taught.

Surprisingly, in interviews with participants, many felt that the level of teaching at the conservatories has been improving. The conservatory system, as established by the Revolutionary government in the early 1960s, is now graduating a second generation of music students. It is believed that as these second generation students enter into teaching positions, they bring with them more skill than the previous generation of music educators. The result is a higher level of playing skill at the *nivel básico* level.

Unlike teachers who have been trained only in the conservatory system, teachers who have completed training at the Pedagogical Institute do have an extensive background in pedagogy. Teachers with this training working in the conservatory system, though they do exist, are rare. The monetary benefits for completing studies at the Pedagogical Institute are small and the motivation to do so is minimal.

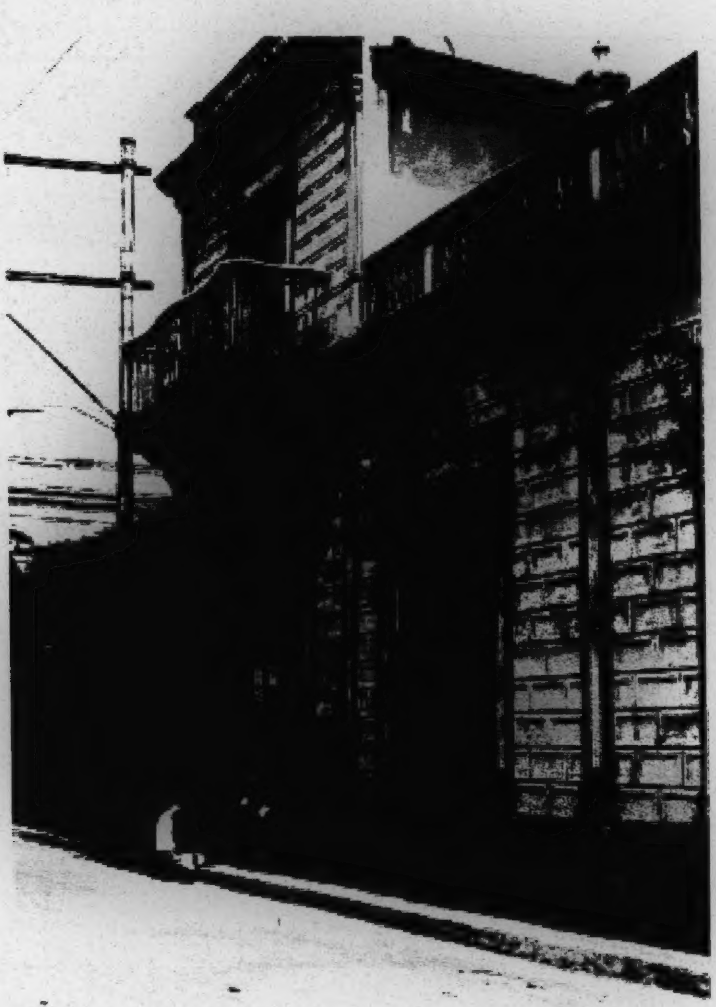

Figure 14: Secondary music students sitting on the front step of *CES* in downtown Santiago.

Curriculum and examination procedures.

Nivel médio conservatories offer a four-year program in specialized music education to Cuban students wanting to become professional musicians. Students audition to enter into the conservatory in the spring of their Grade 9 year. The audition procedure includes a playing exam on their instrument along with *pruebas* or tests for sight singing, ear training, and music theory. In addition, students must participate in an interview where they are questioned about their professional goals. Once accepted into the program, students follow a program similar to that followed in their *nivel básico* training.

Typically, as at the *nivel médio* level, students attend the conservatory for a total of 8 to 10 hours per week, two afternoons a week. Like their elementary counterparts, students often spend extra hours at the music school practicing or listening to their friends' lessons. Teachers normally follow a Monday to Thursday teaching schedule, again with Fridays reserved for lesson planning. The school year is similar in length with two 18-week semesters occurring between September and June.

Unlike the *nivel básico* level, where only a performance major is available, students at the secondary level conservatory may choose from a variety of majors. During their auditions, students must state their preferences of major and, if they are not accepted into their first choice, may be accepted into their second or third choice of major. Majors at the *nivel médio* level include instrumental performance, choral conducting, and theory/*solféo*. Audition requirements for the latter two majors are more demanding in the areas of ear training, sight singing, and theory. Students involved in these majors take additional courses in these subjects.

Course instruction is again similar with students at the *nivel médio* level receiving individual instrumental instruction for a total of 100 minutes per week. Students take classes in s*olféo*, ear training, music history, and music theory in group settings. Students fulfill their requirements for *solféo* and ear training after two years. Third- and fourth-year students are required to fulfill a practicum requirement for one semester in both a performing and teaching situation.

Ensembles requirements are similar to those at the *nivel básico* level. There is compulsory choir for all students for two years; vocal majors, however must be involved in choir for four years. Instrumental students must also be involved in an instrumental ensemble. Ensembles, like at the *nivel básico* level, typically include such groups as guitar ensemble, string orchestra, full orchestra, and ensembles of like instruments.

Performing opportunities at the *nivel médio* level are greater than at the elementary conservatories. Not only do secondary level students have opportunities to participate in festivals, they may register for a summer touring group that gives concerts throughout the rural areas of the province. This tour group is a paid position and students enjoy the opportunity to travel and experience a professional tour. In addition, in the spring of their final year, graduating students have an obligatory performing situation as they must give a one-hour public recital. This recital serves as a *pase de nivel* or final playing exam.

A national curriculum, established by *MINCULT*, guides the instruction offered in all *nivel médio* conservatories in Cuba. Officially, there have not been any curriculum changes since 1974. Unlike at the elementary level, however there is much greater flexibility offered to teachers in their implementation of the curriculum.

Repeatedly in my work with the senior flute teacher at *CES* in Santiago, I asked him to show me a copy of the curriculum. As the weeks passed, he continually forgot to bring me a copy of the document. Finally, he admitted to me that he rarely consulted the document. The required texts and works listed on the curriculum were so difficult to obtain in Cuba that he, like many teachers, had devised his own program of studies. This program is altered as he receives new materials, generally from friends abroad, always in an effort to improve the playing skills of his students.

The lack of curricular supplies at the *nivel médio* level was a concern. Students were seen with poor photocopies or hand-written copies of pieces. Rarely did students possess intact professionally printed copies. Even the conservatory accompanists were often playing from poor photocopies. Original copies of pieces are very difficult to obtain as sheet music is not easily bought in stores.

Cuban *nivel médio* teachers are quick to make friends with foreign musicians in the hope that they will be able to supply them with music and supplies. One teacher told me that he had been searching for a piece of music that he had heard as a student. Finally, after 30 years, he was able to obtain a copy from a foreign friend.

Skills commonly associated with Cuban musicians (*e.g.*, highly developed rhythmic skills, advanced technical skills) seemed to be highlighted at the *nivel médio* level. Upon my initial entry into *CES*, I was shocked by the technical advancement of the young players. It was here that the strengths of the Cuban music education system were blatantly evident.

With no easily attainable curricular materials aiding the 25-year-plus veteran flute teacher at the Santiago conservatory, what makes his students some of the most proficient in the country? The answer appears to be twofold. First, a high standard for technical prowess was required of his students. Students must always be practicing all major, minor, and chromatic scales, as well as corresponding arpeggios and dominant seventh chords over the entire range of their instrument. In addition, students were required to learn a large number of difficult études; for the flute students, some of these études were taken from the *nivel superior* curriculum.

Second, students achieved a high level of performance skill because the pressure to attain increasingly higher skill levels seemed to permeate the conservatory system. An attitude of continual betterment and of raising the overall level of the skills was present in all of the teachers with whom I came in contact. In addition, musicians, once they leave the conservatory, are among some of the most highly paid employees in Cuba. As a result, competition is fierce and skill levels remain high. This competition translates itself into students performing increasingly more difficult programs throughout their *nivel médio* studies.

Examinations at the secondary level conservatory follow a similar format to those at the elementary level in that they are held three times per year. Again, students must present new material at each of their examination periods. Though technical requirements in the form of scales are not officially listed on each exam, students are expected to perform all major, minor, and chromatic scales, as well as related arpeggios, and dominant seventh chords at any of the examination periods. In addition, students must perform études and repertoire.

Again, examinations were held by department, with like instruments taking the exam at the same time. All members of the department attend the exam with the department head serving as the administrator and scribe. Consensus is reached among all teachers and a mark is assigned. Public reading of the marks is also done at this level, including at the graduation recitals. The passing mark is set at 85% and, as seen at the *nivel básico* level, marks of 100% are not uncommon. *Solféo*, ear training, theory, and music history exams follow a similar format to those given at the *nivel básico* level.

Teacher training and pedagogical practices.

Teachers working at the *nivel médio* conservatories have similar training to those working at the *nivel básico* conservatories. All are graduates of at least the *nivel médio* conservatory, with some attending the *nivel superior* conservatory and others, though few in number, the Pedagogical Institute. Like their counterparts at the elementary level, teachers at the *nivel médio* are also often active musicians, many playing in professional ensembles or in the tourist industry.

There is no notable difference in the training of teachers in the *nivel básico* and the *nivel médio* levels. Similar opportunities for sabbatical leaves are available to teachers at the *nivel básico* and the *nivel médio* levels. Most teachers aspire to teach at the *nivel médio* level and when senior teachers are required, they are often promoted from the *nivel básico* conservatories. Senior or more experienced teachers tend to be teaching at the *nivel médio* level.

Fine Arts Schools

A fine arts school in theory is no different from any Cuban conservatory offering both matriculation and music courses. Unlike the conservatories, which are under the governance of the *MINCULT*, fine arts schools are institutions controlled by *MINED*. Programs offered at fine arts school are identical to those offered in the conservatory system.

In practice, course offerings at the conservatories and fine arts schools are somewhat different. For example, in *la EVA* music courses are offered from Grades 3 to 9. In addition, the school offers courses in dance from the *nivel básico* level through to *nivel médio* at the same facility. Unlike *CES*, where matriculation courses are taught in a different building from the music courses, *la EVA* is housed in a enclosed complex of buildings erected specifically for the purpose of serving as a fine arts school.

Teacher training, curriculum, and pedagogical practices at the fine arts school and the conservatory are identical. In discussions with teachers, parents, and students, it is believed that the demands on fine arts school students are greater than on students enrolled at the *nivel básico* conservatories. It is also believed that teachers are more demanding with their students at the fine arts schools.

A belief that students are more likely to attain a place in the *nivel médio* conservatory if they are graduates of the fine arts school as opposed to the *nivel básico* conservatory is also held. Parents and students believe that matriculation courses at the fine arts school are less demanding than those offered in regular stream schools.

The benefit of the fine arts school is that it provides an opportunity for students from rural communities to attend a specialized music school. In addition, instruments that may not be offered in rural locations, such as the bassoon, are often taught in fine arts schools. The fine arts school is unique in that all services are provided under one roof in a modern facility. Conservatories are frequently housed in old buildings that are often in need of major structural repairs.

Nivel Superior Conservatories

Two university level conservatories currently exist in Cuba, one in the city of Havana and the other, a much smaller conservatory, in the city of Camagüey. The curriculum for university level music training is determined on a national level. Competition for entrance into the five-year program is fierce and openings are few.

Graduates from the *Instituto Superior de Arte "Eduardo García Delgado"* (*el ISA*), as the *nivel superior* school in Havana is called, are the most stellar performers in their areas. Many achieve distinguished international careers as musicians, conductors, arrangers, or composers. Others return to work at *el ISA* as teachers. Some work in the *nivel médio* and *nivel básico* conservatories throughout the country, but the economic gain as a performer can easily surpass any economic gain as a teacher. Therefore, many musicians choose to perform rather than teach. This said, music teachers working at any level in the conservatory system can do well financially by Cuban standards, especially if they are also members of a state-sponsored performing group.

Courses offered at *el ISA* continue on in a similar vein to those offered at the lower levels. A detailed curriculum of courses offered at *el ISA* however is outside the scope of this study. As found at the *nivel médio* and *nivel básico levels, el ISA* now offers limited courses in Afro-Cuban music.

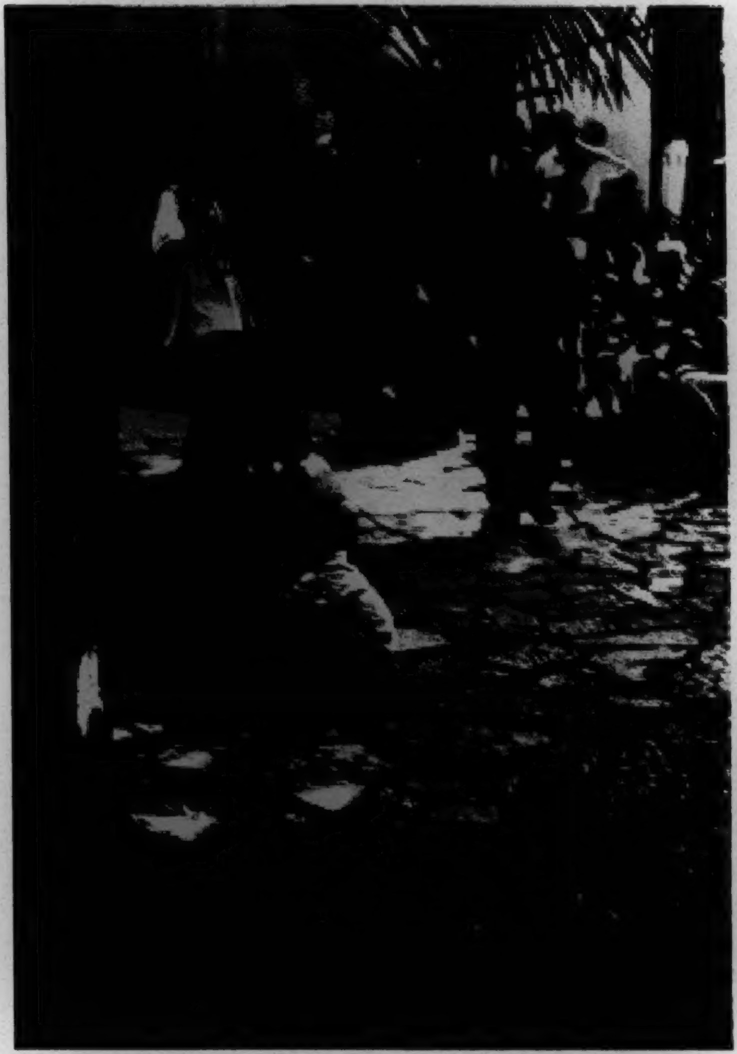

Figure 15: Performers and audience members enjoying a *peña* (musical presentation) on the terrace of the *Casa de África* in Santiago.

The *Casas* organized by the Revolutionary government serve the primary purpose of promoting Cuban culture by allowing Cuban citizens to become involved in the various arts. The *Casa* system is present in all provinces. Not all towns and cities have the entire range of *Casas* but at least one *Casa* is usually available to a community.

Casas or "houses" provide locations where Cubans can meet to become involved in various artistic endeavors. Specifically, some of the *Casas* found throughout Cuba include *La Casa de la Juventud* (House of Youth), *La Casa del Estudiante* (House of Students), *La Casa de Cultura* (House of Culture), *La Casa de África* (House of Africa), *La Casa del Caribe* (House of the Caribbean), *La Casa de la Trova* (House of Troubadours), *La Casa de las Tradiciones* (House of Tradition) and *La Casa de Música* (House of Music).

Each *Casa* has its own mandate and clientele to which its activities are oriented. *Casas* showcase the talents of community members as well as provide additional learning opportunities. Many have public presentations, conferences and publications, often of an international level. *Casas* develop programs in all of the arts including the visual arts, music, drama, and dance.

The programming of each *Casa* depends on the initiative of workers in the *Casa*. There is no nationally organized curriculum for the *Casa* system. Examples of *Casa* activities include the *Festival de Bolero* at the *Casa de las Tradiciones* in Santiago; the *Festival del Caribe*, an international festival of song and dance sponsored by the *Casa del Caribe;* and the weekly *peñas* or " open stages" at the *Casa de África* that showcase young Afrocuban talent. Other *Casa* activities include children's choirs, adult performing groups, seniors' art classes, and drumming circles.

The impact that the *Casa* system has on secondary music education is notable. Participants in the study stated that the *Casas* provide excellent opportunities for students, especially from rural areas, to be exposed to the arts. Often it is an experience at a *Casa de Cultura* that provides the impetus for a student to enter the conservatory system.

The highly organized and publicized system of amateur singing competitions held annually in Cuba is sponsored through the *Casa de Cultura.* This yearly competition has a unifying effect on the country, as provincial winners travel to Havana to compete nationally on public television. A recording contract is frequently offered to the winner. Another effect of the competition is a nationwide interest in singing.

Workers at the *Casas* are trained in schools labeled Schools for Social Workers (*Trabajadores Sociales*). *Escuela de Instructores de Arte "Pepito Tey,"* the newly opened Santiago School for Social Workers, has yet to graduate its first class. Students may enroll in *Pepito Tey* following the completion of Grade 9. For four years, students are trained in the skills needed to operate and develop the various programs offered in the *Casa* system. Students tend to come from rural locations and are encouraged to return to their communities to develop their own *Casas.*

CHAPTER 5: *LA ESCUELA VOCACIONAL DE ARTES* (*LA EVA*)

School Information

Mi Escuela

Mi escuela, pedazo de patria,
forjadora, de futuros artistas,
entre luchas, estudio y conquistas,
alcanzará, nuestro ideal.
Mi escuela, ejemplo de todas,
las consignas de la educación,
caminemos, firmes y seguros,
arte, vanguardia, de la Revolución.

My School

My school, a piece of the fatherland,
The forge of future artists,
Between battles, study and conquests,
We will reach our ideal.
My school, an example of everything,
The motto of education,
We will walk, firm and secure,
Art, in the vanguard of the Revolution.

(School song sung daily by *la EVA* music students to begin their day.)

Figure 16: A road leading to *la EVA*. The school's dance facilities are seen in the background.

This section will provide an in-depth look at one of the primary training facilities for music education in Santiago de Cuba: *la Escuela Vocacional de Artes* (*la EVA*). The section will be divided into two subsections: (a) an overall description of the school (*e.g.*, physical setting, course offerings, overview of the teaching and student populations); and (b) a case study of one of the school's music teachers (woodwind department), including an analysis of her teaching philosophy and pedagogical practice.

Background

La EVA is considered to be the flagship school for elementary music education in the province of Santiago. Built in 1986, the school is one of two in the city of Santiago, along with *EMLF*, that offers music education at the *nivel básico* level. Unlike *EMLF*, where students receive their music classes in the afternoon after attending regular school in the morning, *la EVA* is a fully functioning fine arts school offering both the entire range of matriculation subjects and specialized fine arts instruction in music and dance following the national curriculum.

The two streams offered at the school differ in their organization. Dance students receive both their *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* training at *la EVA*, graduating with the equivalent of a secondary school diploma. Music students, in contrast, can only complete *nivel básico* at *la EVA*. Music students who continue on to the *nivel médio* level must audition at the end of their Grade 9 year in order to be accepted into the *CES*. Currently, 504 students are enrolled at *la EVA* with a total of 220 enrolled in the music department. A total of 199 teachers and 6 staff work at the facility.

Location and Physical Description

The facility compound, built specifically for the purpose of functioning as a fine arts school, is located north of Santiago's city center. Situated within a few blocks of the *Universidad de Oriente* and *Pepito Tey*, the newly opened school for social workers, *la EVA* is considered to be centrally located. Though the facility is located within the boundaries of metropolitan Santiago, it is difficult to reach by public transit.

Situated in the middle of a large field, the school consists of a series of low-rise buildings connected by covered walkways. Bordering the compound are a heavily guarded military base, a series of soccer pitches, a major highway, and a small grouping of banana fields. The facility can only be approached from two directions. Further access is limited by a steeply fenced hill and a dead-end street. Although the school is located but a few blocks from the *Vista Alegre* district, a formerly upscale residential neighbourhood that now houses many administrative offices and consulates, an illusion of isolation prevails.

Once inside the fenced compound of the school (a *concierge* is located at both entrances to the school), a feeling of airiness is evident. Trees and tropical flowers such as bougainvillea and bird-of-paradise are planted throughout the property. Walkways are spacious and a large central courtyard area allows one to view the entire campus. Vistas of the surrounding *Sierra Maestra* mountains and the heavily treed neighbourhoods can be seen from any terrace in the school.

The majority of the predominantly white school buildings are constructed of concrete with wooden windows and railings. Like much Cuban architecture, many of the buildings are open to the elements in atrium style. Hallways frequently consist of only a roof and a series of support columns. One can easily lean over a fourth-floor balcony to observe the activity occurring on the three lower floors.

The school consists of four major areas. Upon entering the front door, visitors pass through a large and sparsely decorated waiting area. Off this waiting area are located the administrative offices, a small room for musical performances, staff washrooms, and a secretarial room. The central waiting area has several uncomfortable chairs and a few tables. A *concierge*, seated at a desk adorned by a telephone and a notebook, overseas the entryway of the school and fields telephone calls.

Down a series of steps, visitors next reach the dance area. The dance area consists of two large rooms or studios outfitted with barres, mirrors, pianos, wooden floors, and a few chairs. Up until recently, these two studios were open to the elements but during the Phase 2 of data collection, work began to enclose the two *aulas* (classrooms) from the elements.

Continuing to the open courtyard area, visitors reach the center of the facility. To the left are additional rooms for the dance department. To the right is the four-storey music wing. Directly ahead is the academic wing. School dormitories are located behind the academic wing.

Artwork, in the form of paintings and some sculptures, is located throughout the facility. The buildings are sparsely furnished. Seating is generally simple wooden chairs, often missing cushions or in a state of disrepair. Tables are built of metal and wood. Furnishing in the classrooms and offices are sparse in comparison to those found in North America.

Typically, classrooms are furnished with a series of wood/metal chairs and tables. Few additional items are found in the *aulas*. Classrooms do not have computers, telephones, intercoms, televisions, or file cabinets. Most notable is the lack of print materials such as papers or books within these rooms. Decorations, in the form of posters, etc., are minimal. Numerous windows are cracked and the roof often leaks. There are no lockers for students.

Throughout the hilly compound, students lounge between classes. There is never a feeling of being crowded or a lack of space. Younger students are often seen sitting on the floor playing jacks or a variety of Cuban games involving rubber balls or rolled up pieces of masking tape. Older students chat with one another. Teachers stroll by, supervising the uniformed children, sometimes refereeing a disagreement or correcting a situation involving inappropriate behavior.

The music wing consists of four stories. The first floor contains the administrative offices as well as a textbook room and classrooms for ear training and music history. On the second floor are similar classrooms and instrumental studios.

Within each department (piano, strings, percussion, woodwinds, and brass), classrooms are located in close proximity to one another with the woodwind, brass, and percussion departments being housed on the fourth or top floor. A small recital hall is located on the third floor.

Within the music wing, music classrooms, like regular classrooms, are sparsely furnished. For example, the flute *aula*, a room of approximately 4 meters by 3 meters, contains a piano and bench, a wood/metal table with an accompanying chair, and a crude wooden music stand. The room is adorned simply with a small vase of artificial flowers and a few posters. A leaky roof often results in the floor of the *aula* being immersed in water after a rain storm. Although the room does have a light fixture, there are no light bulbs; windows are the primary source of light.

The clarinet room, situated next door, is similar but, in addition to the furnishings found in the flute *aula*, it also contains a wooden book shelf. The bassoon room, located further down the hall, is more sparsely furnished than the flute *aula*. All music rooms at minimum contain a piano and bench along with a wooden music stand.

Figure 17: A view from the top floor of the *la EVA* music building that shows the school grounds. In the foreground, students go about their daily activities.

Sound transmission from room to room is prevalent throughout the facility. There is no insulation in the walls of the facility. The doors and windows are left open in an attempt to keep students and teachers cool in the tropical climate. The result is a cacophony of sound. Seated in a music classroom, one can hear the Afro-Cuban drum accompaniment to the upper-level dance class below, a first-year violinist reviewing technical exercises, a saxophonist practicing jazz licks, and a few trumpet students rehearsing for their upcoming exam.

Repeatedly, I would ask students and teachers if they were bothered by the sound transmission. More often than not, they would say "no" and that they did not even notice it. Only the drums seemed to provide occasional annoyance for them. Indeed, it was I, the researcher, who seemed to be the most bothered by sound transmission; rarely did Cubans acknowledge a concern.

The transmission of sound, however, appeared to have some positive benefits from a pedagogical point of view. First, students appeared to develop a deep sense of concentration from an early stage of development. Students were able to complete their lessons and even performances in situations where it was difficult to hear the student's instrument above the extraneous noises coming from other studios. Second, sound transmission allowed both teachers and students to keep abreast of student progress.

For example, the woodwind department head, situated in the room adjacent to the flute *aula*, could easily hear the individual progress of students in the flute studio. In this manner, the department head was kept abreast of the pedagogical practices employed by the teacher. In the same manner, students, while waiting for their lessons, could easily hear the progress of their peers. Beginning students could also easily hear upper-level students in their lesson time, hopefully being provided with a positive sound role model.

A major concern related to the facility of the school arose throughout data collection. This concern was with respect to entry to the classrooms. As found in North America, classrooms and studios in Cuban music schools are kept locked when the teacher is not present. Unlike in North America, where copies of the keys are easily available to teachers and administrators, in Cuba, the norm is to have only one key for each classroom. This practice resulted in lost classroom time for students.

On several occasions, I observed that students and teachers alike would be locked out of their music studio due to a custodian not returning a classroom key after cleaning the facility. On other occasions, teachers would be late, often due to transportation problems or illness, and classrooms would be unusable as no key was available. A loss of lesson time, due to problems obtaining entry to classrooms, was a concern.

Another area of concern was the unused rooms in the facility. Prior to entering the Cuban music schools, I had been alerted by several Cuban musicians that I would find a number of unused, abandoned pianos. I had also been alerted that a leak to the European press of photos of these abandoned instruments had caused the closing of Cuban schools to international visitors. In order to be sensitive to the political situation of the music schools and in order to maintain my credibility as a researcher, I chose not to delve further into this issue of unusable pianos. I decided to take no photographs or video footage of the badly abused instruments and not to ask related questions.

Nonetheless, I was rather surprised to see such instruments. In a country where cardboard boxes and small pieces of metal are treasured commodities, I assumed that any piano would have been used for as long as possible. Still, walking down the hallways of *la EVA* and seeing rooms with abandoned, dismantled pianos, I was profoundly affected by their visual images. Feeling it improper to ask further questions, I assumed that the instruments had been stripped for replacement parts to repair other pianos.

Figure 18: A smiling *la EVA* student taking some time to relax between classes.

As in all Cuban public schools, students at *la EVA* are required to wear a school uniform. The uniform for elementary students consists of a short-sleeved white shirt with red shorts for boys and red skirts for girls. Many elementary students also wear the blue scarf associated with the *Pioneros*, a national youth organization sponsored by the Communist Party that provides extra-curricular activities for children. Secondary level students wear short-sleeved white shirts with boys being dressed in long gold trousers and girls being dressed in gold pleated skirts.

The student body at *la EVA*, for this researcher, appeared to be somewhat conservative in appearance as compared to student bodies in North America. There was an obvious lack of extremes of appearance. Hair was conservative both in style and in colour. Tattoos were rarely seen, there was minimal body piercing, and makeup was conservative. An attention to personal hygiene is important in Cuban culture and students appeared clean and professional. As in Cuban society in general, students came from a blended racial background with both African and Iberian roots. Some Asian influence was also seen.

Teaching Body

The teaching body was similar to that of the student body in that there were few extremes in terms of appearance. Body piercing, hair colour, dress, and makeup were conservative in nature though Cuban women did appear to enjoy bright colours both in their makeup and in their clothing. Male teachers, as is the social expectation in many Caribbean countries, wore long pants rather than shorts. Jackets were uncommon for male teachers. Female teachers, like their male counterparts, preferred to sport short-sleeved shirts due to the climate conditions. The same range of racial origins was found in the teaching body as in the student body.

During the time period that the researcher was involved in data collection at *la EVA*, there were 199 teachers on the payroll at the school in both the dance and music departments. As in the conservatories and fine arts schools throughout the country, teachers at the facility possessed a variety of qualifications. While the majority teachers at *la EVA* had earned a *nivel médio* certificate, a minority had earned a *nivel superior* certificate. In addition, a minority also had earned a certificate from the Pedagogical

Institute. Of the 11 music teachers at the *la EVA* who were fulfilling their social services requirement, three were in their first year of teaching while eight were in their second. A full teaching load for an instrumental teacher at *la EVA* is 20 hours per week or 10 students. Music history and s*olféo* teachers have a reduced hourly load due to their class sizes.

Historically, since the opening of the school, teachers have been difficult to procure at *la EVA*. The low monthly salary of approximately $10.00 U.S. is a contributing factor. Professional musicians can earn a significantly larger salary on tour or playing for tourists so potential teachers are regularly lost to the performance sector. Often, teachers at the school supplement their income by performing in ensembles such as the symphony orchestra or the Tropicana Nightclub orchestra. The difficulty of obtaining reliable transportation to the school has also compounded the teacher shortage issue. Paid accompanists for *la EVA* students are difficult to obtain due to similar issues.

Organization and Timetabling

Like all conservatories and fine arts school in Cuba, *la EVA* offers both long and short stream music instruction based on the Eastern European model of education where students are identified for careers in the arts at an early age. Students in the long stream option at *la EVA* begin their instruction in Grade 3. They may select either the violin or the piano as their instrument. Students in the short stream option begin their instruction in Grade 5 and may select from the following instruments for their major area of study: flute, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion, string bass, classical guitar, or choir directing/voice.

In the music department, mornings are reserved, for the most part, for instruction in the matriculation subjects such as Mathematics, English, Spanish, etc. Afternoons are reserved for music study. Students usually begin their morning classes at 8:30 a.m. and, depending upon their individual schedules, may finish as late at 5:00 p.m.

Large ensemble rehearsals take place on Saturday afternoons while small ensembles rehearse in open slots in the timetable that are suitable for all participants. Participation in the large ensemble, an orchestra, is compulsory for students in Grades 7 and upwards. The orchestra plays mainly popular Cuban music and consists of approximately 60-70 players.

Students audition for supplementary instrumental groups. In addition to the orchestra, students at *la EVA* may also participate in two select choirs apart from the required choral classes, as well as two jazz combos and two *flauta dulce* (recorder) ensembles, one for soprano and one for tenor recorders. There is also an auditioned *orchestra de cámara* for the string players. Small ensembles rehearse in the afternoons in open slots when the students do not have private music instruction. The range of hours spent in music instruction per week is from 10 to 16 hours.

Individual instrumental teachers teach four afternoons per week from Monday through Thursday. The Friday schedule at *la EVA* is determined on a need basis as a result of holidays or other interruptions in the timetable. For example, a Friday may run on a Tuesday schedule or a Wednesday schedule as determined by the administration.

Required Courses

All students are required to take the same set of compulsory matriculation courses. Compulsory matriculation subjects for all *la EVA* students wishing to graduate are Spanish, English, History, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Geography, and Physical Education. In addition to private instrument instruction and *solféo* courses, students must be enrolled in music appreciation, choir, and piano. For the first two years, *solféo* courses include instruction in music theory. Beginning in third year, *solféo* and music theory are offered as two separate compulsory courses for all students. Courses are offered twice weekly for 45-50 minutes each session.

School Enrollment and Holidays

Children attending the school who live in the city of Santiago are enrolled as day students. Those children whose families live in the province of Santiago are enrolled as residence (*beca*) students. Throughout the school year, several long weekends are arranged in order to allow residence students to return home. Usually, these holidays begin on a Thursday and students return to their courses the following Tuesday or Wednesday. Extended weekend holidays often coincide with important calendar dates (*e.g.*, *El Día de las Mujeres*, the Cuban equivalent of Mother's Day). Teachers are not required to be at school during these holidays.

Highlights of an Interview with la EVA Administration

Wanting to get a sense of understanding of other issues related to the development of *la EVA* as an institution, I interviewed, formally and informally, the current Vice-Principal of the music department. Originally a piano instructor, now in her first year as an administrator, Milagros is a veteran teacher at the facility. Along with asking for information relating to the organizational structure of the school, I posed the following question to Milagros: What do you feel are the strengths of the program made available to students *la EVA*? Her reply yielded insight as to the internal workings of the institution.

First, Milagros believed that the skill levels of the students at *la EVA* has risen. This she attributed to the fact that the majority of the teachers at *la EVA* have gone through the conservatory system established by the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the early post-revolutionary system as students, these educators went on to develop superior teaching skills, often excelling beyond those of the previous generation. This same type of response was also given by teachers I interviewed.

In addition to higher levels of teaching, Milagros stated that better means of identifying potential students are now in place. Audition procedures have become fine-tuned. Potential students now go through a rigorous entrance audition process that frequently involves two or three visits to the school. Auditions for acceptance into *la EVA* now consist of singing a song, clapping rhythms, performing advanced co-ordination exercises, and singing dictated melodies. The physical attributes of students are also taken into consideration with respect to instrument selection. For example, students with thin lips are encouraged to select the trumpet as opposed to the tuba. According to Milagros, due to the work of the *Casas de Cultura* and the *círculos infantiles*, young students arriving at the school possess a wide variety of musical experience in choirs and various performing groups.

Although I heard the contrary from various teachers in the system, the Vice-Principal of the music department stated that communication between *la EVA* and *CES* was good. As a new administrator, this being her first year in the position, Milagros stated that she frequently phoned the conservatory for assistance. The general impression was that she was quite pleased with what existed in terms of communication between the two schools; however, she did plan on organizing future seminars in order for teachers at *la EVA* to make formal contact with teachers at *CES*.

The Vice-Principal highlighted the recommendations of a recent review of the school by *MINCULT*. A national officer, sent to observe the workings of the school, made several recommendations in order to improve the program offered to students. Among these recommendations, the most exigent was the need to provide more performance experiences for students.

A recent effort has been made by administration to increase the number of concerts and public presentations by students at *la EVA*. A series of monthly concerts has been established, where students give performances in front of parents and the general public. In addition, each department organizes a Spring Festival where students receive an adjudication and mark for their performance.

The purpose behind such an initiative was to aid student motivation and to provide a variety of performing experiences. According to Milagros, students have been quite motivated by these concerts. Students who perform in the Spring Festival are exempt from their end-of-the-year examinations.

The interview portion related to areas of improvement at the school was somewhat delicate in nature. In conversations with many Cuban professionals (*e.g.*, healthcare workers, public school teachers, administrative assistants), I had come to realize that public criticism of state organizations in Cuba is frowned upon and Cuban citizens are reluctant to state their opinions about how to improve existing institutions. Indeed, some of the professionals with whom I came in contact had stated that public expression of negative criticism had to be first sanctioned by a party member.

For example, in an interview with a Cuban healthcare worker, I learned that workers from *MINSAP* had gone into the schools to study reports of teachers slapping and belittling students. Once in the educational institutions, the social workers realized that the teachers, many of them well respected over a long and successful career, were hitting their students out of personal frustration with the educational and economic systems within the country. A program, developed to aid and educate these teachers, was canceled by the government because by allowing such an assistance program to exist, the government would be forced to admit there was something wrong with the existing situation.

As a result of my knowledge of this situation with the *MINSAP* work, I consulted several Cuban professionals prior to interviewing Milagros. I finally framed my question relating to improvement of the system in the following manner: "Given recent improvements in your school, what areas do you foresee will improve in upcoming years?"

When asked this question, as expected, the Vice-Principal was somewhat reticent to reply. She hesitated initially and did not respond. With some prompting, Milagros finally stated that more hard work was what was needed. A personal quest for higher levels of *solféo* teaching, something she had experienced as a student in Havana, was eventually given as a priority.

A Case Study of a la EVA Instrumental Teacher: Rosa

Personal Information

In an attempt to understand the factors that influence the teaching philosophy and pedagogical practices of Cuban music educators, I conducted a case study of Rosa, one of the instrumental teachers at *la EVA*. Included within this section are subsections outlining Rosa's family background, her current living situation, her musical preparation, her professional activities, and an account of her pedagogical practices. Combined, this information attempts to give an understanding of the background of one Cuban music educator and a concept of her current teaching reality.

Introduction

The majority of my interviews with Rosa were of an informal nature. Some were held over lunch or a light snack; others were held prior to or after her teaching day at *la EVA;* others were held en route to *la EVA* in some form of public transportation. At the beginning of Phase 1 of data collection, many interviews were held at the home of Rosa's mother between rehearsals of *la Banda* and Rosa's afternoon teaching at *la EVA*.

Informal interviews at the home of Rosa's mother often included other family members. Sometimes, Rosa's mother would offer information. Rosa's brother, who came to his mother's home for lunch on a regular basis, would also make unsolicited contributions to the interview. A brief description of Rosa's family background has therefore been included. No interviews took place in Rosa's own home due to transportation difficulties to that location and the ease of meeting at her mother's home.

Family Background

Rosa, 33, is the youngest of three children. Born to a family with primarily Iberian roots, there is little visible Afro-Cuban influence in Rosa's appearance. Rosa, like her mother and brother, is fair skinned and as a blonde Cuban is somewhat of an anomaly. Rosa is short in stature and of average build. She enjoys wearing brightly coloured clothing and makeup and, as do many Cuban women, always sports painted nails. A street accident and brutal fall caused a major injury to one of Rosa's arms and, although she has regained complete movement of the appendage, she limits the items she carries to reduce any threat of further strain.

Rosa's older sister, married and with children, lives in Spain. Both Rosa and her mother have traveled to the Iberian peninsula to visit these family members. Upon my departure at the end of Phase 2 of data collection, Rosa's mother was in the beginning stages of planning another trip to visit her daughter overseas.

Rosa's brother, 36, is in the process of studying for a career as a missionary. His study involves a placement at a fledgling church in the neighbouring province of Granma. Twice weekly, he travels by bus to the community to give services and encourage the development of the new church. He regularly lunches at his mother's home on the days that he travels to the mission.

Rosa's mother, who lives in the center of Santiago close to the city's largest food market, is divorced from Rosa's father. She earns money by renting rooms in her home to tourists. From the outside, the wooden house appears somewhat shabby and unkempt. On the inside however, the home is, by North American standards, sparse but extremely clean and organized. Recent renovations to her home, intended to attract more business, have included a new bathroom and kitchen improvements.

Cubans renting their homes to tourists can make a substantial income; however, like many other *casa* owners, Rosa's mother supplements her income by selling various items, both legal and illegal, to tourists. In the future, Rosa's mother also hopes to supplement her income by playing the saxophone in her local church, a position that will pay her 100 pesos per month ($4.50 U.S.). Being a lover of music, but until recently not a participant, Rosa's mother is a student of saxophone at the *EMLF*. During data collection, she was completing her second year of training.

Well into her sixties, Rosa's mother feeds her two adult children lunch on a regular basis. In most Cuban families, daily contact with adult children is important as is contact with grandchildren, cousins, nieces, and nephews. The importance of family, reflected in this daily contact, is an integral part of Cuban culture. Indeed, as Rosa's mother stated, the only reason she has not emigrated to Spain, an economically better country for her to live in, is because of the family ties that she wishes to maintain in Cuba.

Current Status

A mother of two pre-school children, Rosa lives with her husband and family in a neighbourhood close to the International Airport. The neighbourhood has poor bus service. As a Cuban, Rosa can hail any vehicle with a government license plate to transport her to her place of employment free of charge. This service is not available to tourists who must use taxis or the public transportation system. Rosa's home is approximately 15 minutes drive to that of her mother and 15 minutes drive to *la EVA*.

Rosa's husband, of Chinese descent, is employed as a supplier to the restaurant and tourism industry. As a result of her husband's job, Rosa and her family have access to resorts and beaches restricted to the general Cuban public. In addition, because of her husband's employment, Rosa and her family have access to a car, another restricted item for Cuban citizens. Rosa's husband frequently picks her up at the end of her school day in his vehicle. While Rosa is working, her children attend free day care provided by the state.

Professional Activities

In addition to being a mother to two small children, Rosa is employed as a professional musician and as a teacher at *la EVA*. Her work week is extensive. Mornings, from 9:00 until 11:30, Tuesday through Friday, Rosa is employed as a professional flutist by *la Banda*, Santiago's professional concert band. Afternoons, from Monday through Thursday, she is employed as a private flute teacher by *la EVA*. A normal class load for an instrumental teacher at *la EVA* is 10 students so Rosa is considered to be beyond the regular teaching limit with 11 students.

According to Rosa, with two employers, *la Banda* and *la EVA*, she can make enough money to live quite comfortably by Cuban standards. Each position pays her approximately $10.00 U.S. per month. Although these salaries, by North American standards, appear extremely low, it must be noted that Cubans receive a monthly food stipend from the government along with free health and dental care. This said, the cost of a new pair of shoes equals half of Rosa's monthly intake and the cost of a new pair of jeans equals her month's salary.

Along with weekly rehearsals with *la Banda* and classes at *la EVA*, Rosa has additional professional requirements. Sunday afternoon concerts for *la Banda* are frequent as are Wednesday morning breakfast concerts for cruise ships entering the port of Santiago. Often, the call time for these morning concerts is 6:30. Concerts for visiting dignitaries, often announced at short notice, also occur regularly. In addition, Rosa teaches three private flute students at her home and gives supplementary lessons for her students from *la EVA*.

Musical Background

Rosa does not come from a long line of professional musicians. To her knowledge, she is the only member of her extended family to be employed as a professional musician. Neither is there a long history of amateur musical involvement in her family. Her mother's recent attraction to the saxophone was a direct result of having observed Rosa and her activities as a professional musician/teacher.

Rosa began her musical training in a rather unusual manner. As a young child, she was frequently in trouble for misbehaving. Her *padre* or father, an architect by trade whom she describes as an educated and cultured man, would punish her by having her sit and listen to WEAM. Unable to leave her listening chair for up to two hours in some instances, Rosa became exposed to a varied repertoire of WEAM. Ironically, this punishment served as the impetus for her introduction to the world of WEAM and eventually led to her career as a professional musician.

At the age of 10, Rosa began playing the flute. She auditioned and was accepted into the *nivel básico* conservatory in Santiago which, at that time, was located at the *CES*. During her studies at the conservatory, she was under the tutelage of two flute teachers. One of her teachers was Pedro, a well respected teacher and performer in the Santiago area with whom I spent a substantial amount of time during Phase 2 of data collection. Accepted into the *nivel médio* conservatory after Grade 9, Rosa moved to Havana to complete her music education because the province of Santiago did not have a *nivel médio* conservatory at this time.

Throughout her training as a professional musician, Rosa was provided with a quality flute and musical training free of charge. At no point was there any financial outlay on the part of her parents for instruments, lessons, supplies, festivals, etc. As a young girl, Rosa remembers receiving a new flute, encased in the plastic covering from the factory, in her second or third month of study. Selections of music, provided by her teacher, were lent to her throughout her studies and were plentiful in number. Unfortunately, Rosa had to return these selections to her teacher at the end of her study period.

Rosa currently plays a flute provided by *la Banda*. Like many of the instruments that I saw professional musicians playing in Cuba, the instrument, though of good quality, is not a professional model. All written materials that Rosa uses are provided either by *la Banda* or *la EVA* though supplies are limited. The flute that she received in her second month of study is still in her possession, it being hers to keep.

When I questioned Rosa about her musical training, she stated that she had been very well-trained for her position as a professional musician. Her lessons, held twice per week and frequently with an accompanist, provided her with the basic knowledge that she felt she needed in order to be a member of *la Banda*. At no time did Rosa believe that there was an incongruence between her schooling as a musician and the job that she settled into after graduation.

Rosa does not improvise and has no interest in attending *descarga*s or jam sessions. Throughout the interview process, she stated that she does not want to learn to improvise. Ironically, it appears that she does have a natural affinity to do so. This I discovered when I was introducing her students to the Blues.

In 1985, having completed her *nivel médio* training, Rosa returned to Santiago to work as a professional musician in the *la Banda*. She has played in the group continually since that time and considers the ensemble to be her family. As she states, *la Banda* is a group where people grow old. Personnel changes have been few throughout her 18-year involvement with the ensemble.

As one of two women in the approximately 40-piece ensemble, *la Banda* provides Rosa with a tranquil yet challenging job. On several occasions, Rosa confided to me that she prefers playing in the group to teaching at *la EVA*. Unlike symphony members or professional musicians working in nightclubs and tourist locations, *la Banda* provides her with steady employment as a musician along with free time to spend with her young family.

Rosa also enjoys the challenges that *la Banda* brings to her as a professional musician. She considers the ensemble to be a school as well as a job. She especially enjoys the challenge of sight reading varied repertoire including jazz, popular, and Afro-Cuban selections. In addition, Rosa likes the varied performance repertoire of the ensemble, which can range from Mozart Symphonies and Sousa Marches to Mambos by Beny Moré or Walt Disney classics.

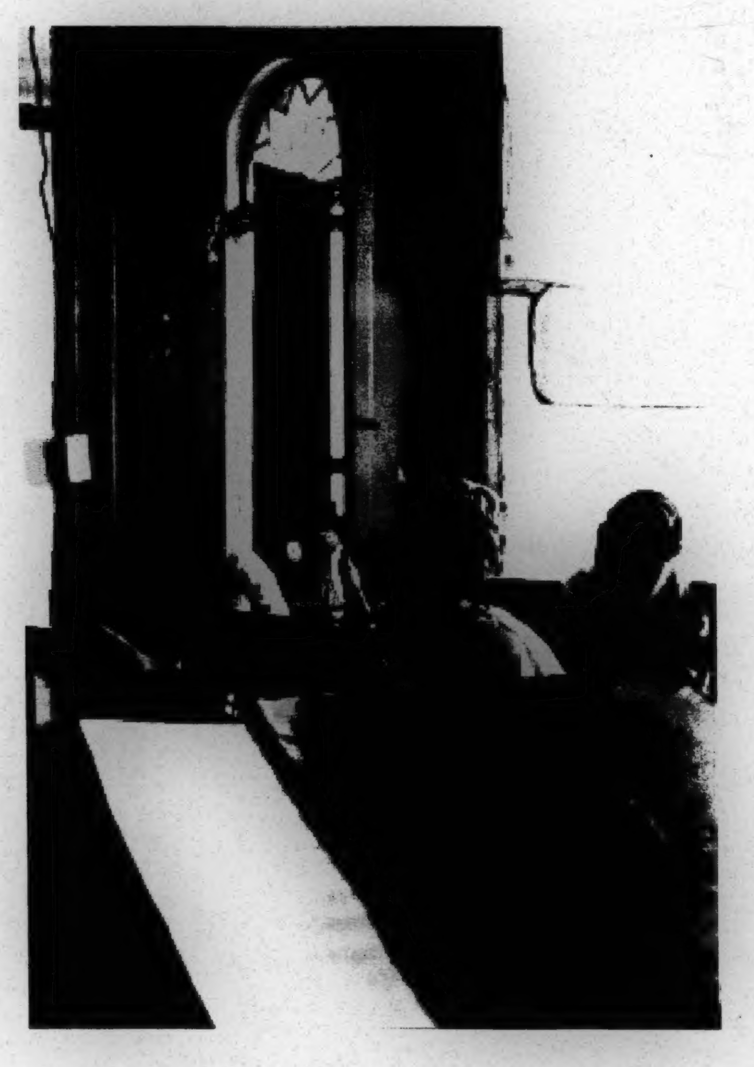

Figure 19: Two members of the clarinet section awaiting instruction in a *la Banda* rehearsal.

Shortly after its entrance into power, the Castro government legislated and provided funding for a professional concert band in each of the nine provincial capitals of the nation. *La Banda* is a federally funded ensemble that provides services both for the community and the province of Santiago. *La Banda* has a fascinating history.

Founded by one of the Maceo Brothers, a Santiago family of freedom fighters active in the 19th century, *la Banda* began with a spirit of revolution. Today, rather than being revolutionary, *la Banda* celebrates the unique culture of Cuba and more specifically, that of the eastern portion of the nation: *Oriente*. Emmanuele Honorín describes the band in the following manner in his notes included with the ensemble's second album:

> This exemplary society on a cockleshell, this gift from history to mankind is representative of a nation idealistic and resistant. *La Banda* is both within the world and outside of time. Yet it has enjoyed one century of existence and the music stands are practically passed on from father to son. . . . Old molded stands holding dog-eared, freshly ironed music scores. This is where a number of musicians began their career starting with the most famous of today, Compay Segundo, who was the band's clarinetist in 1939. . . This is where the memory is held of composers and authors of passing or lasting fame, from Cuba, Latin America, and many other places, for it is in the nature of *la Banda* to absorb repertoires from elsewhere, to reinvent little-known of famous pieces. . . . There have been many gatherings as well, along with exchanges of scores, musical notes, travelling friends coming to visit, festival in France, St. Sever Eauze, Bordeaux, *paso dobles* imbibed here and performed there. But Santiago remains where *la Banda* works and plays, reinventing all these melodies in its inimitable style.
>
> (La banda municipal de Santiago de Cuba, 2002)

In order to better understand Rosa's professional life as a musician, I became a temporary member of *la Banda.* As a participant in *la Banda* for seven rehearsals and one concert I found the group to be very amiable and professional. *La Banda* was a place where I could meet the people of Cuba without the usual glibness that one would see in encounters with tourists. I felt that the people that I met through the band had an integrity that often I did not find in the people that I met on the street or in tourist locations.

Within the confines of the rehearsal space of *la Banda*, a small second-floor hall that looks out onto the *San Pedro* district of Santiago, I felt a sense of camaraderie and safety. I was welcomed into the group, given solos at every opportunity, and asked to perform with *la Banda* in its concerts. The gifts that I took for members of the band, such as scores, ligatures, reeds, or drum sticks, were greatly appreciated.

Band members, seeing me in the downtown streets would wave, smile, or make a point of coming over to see if I was in need of any assistance. Like Rosa, I felt that the group was very much more than a professional performing ensemble and more that of a family. As a female, I was graciously accepted by the two female instrumentalists in the group. The male instrumentalists were very respectful and less likely to look upon me as a commodity as I had so frequently experienced in my daily encounters.

Members of *la Banda*, like Rosa, have been trained in the music schools of the country. Many of the older members received their musical training in the army prior to the establishment of the national system of music education. The group tours on a regular basis and has performed concerts throughout Europe, especially in France. *La Banda* continues to be active in the community of Santiago as well as abroad. Many members, like Rosa, teach at the various music conservatories in the afternoon.

Pedagogical Practices

Background Information

At the end of Phase 2 of data collection, Rosa was completing her first year as a teacher of flute at *la EVA*. With nearly 20 years of experience as a professional flutist, she brought a wide range of knowledge to the position. Prior to her employment at the school, Rosa taught private lessons to several students at her home on a semi-regular basis. In terms of classroom teaching, Rosa was considered to be a novice teacher as she had no prior experience teaching in the public school system in Cuba.

Rosa was the third flute teacher in three years to be hired by *la EVA*. In the previous year parents had expressed concerns over a lack of continuity and organization in the flute area. Specifically, parents feared that the curriculum had not been accurately followed due to a change in teacher each year. In addition, during the 2001-2002 academic year, children had to travel to a different location in the city to receive their flute lessons. This travel resulted in a large number of missed classes for students. Wanting to eliminate such concerns, administrators at *la EVA* began searching for a qualified teacher who would work at their facility for an extended period of time.

When *la EVA* contacted Rosa to teach at the school, she accepted, feeling that her children were of an age where she could spend less time at home. Rosa was not interviewed for the position; nor was she required to audition for it. Administrators at the school knew of her qualifications and background through other teachers at the facility. Rosa was hired by means of a short telephone call to her residence.

As the only teacher of flute at *la EVA,* Rosa is also the only flute teacher at the *nivel básico* level in the city of Santiago. *EMLF* does not offer flute instruction and has not done so for several years due to difficulties in obtaining a teacher. Therefore, young students wishing to learn the flute through formal music education channels must audition for entry into *la EVA,* as no other school in the city offers flute instruction at the *nivel básico* level.

One alternate route is available to prospective flute students that have not been accepted into *la EVA.* This route, however, is generally reserved for advanced students. Students may audition for the two flute teachers at *CES* in the spring of each year to be enrolled in the Special Plan offered at that institution. Special Plan students are generally students who have completed elementary training on another instrument and who have shown an affinity for the flute. Special Plan students must complete the requirements of *nivel básico,* including performance exams, ear training, history, and *solféo* requirements, within one or two years of study. Like their counterparts from *la EVA* and *EMLF*, these students must audition for entry into the *CES* in order to continue their musical training.

In my time spent observing Rosa in her classroom, she repeatedly stated to me that she did not enjoy teaching and that she found it very stressful. Her preference was to be a performer with *la Banda.* Whereas it was evident through her actions that she enjoyed working with several of her students, she did express her concern over how difficult she found teaching. She especially disliked dealing with younger students who were lacking in motivation or discipline.

Another factor that was repeatedly exposed in Rosa's teaching was her lack of attention to time constraints. At no time in the period spent in her classroom did I observe her operating on a regularly timed schedule. According to school policy, students were to receive two 50-minute lessons per week. In practice, some students received lessons that were 10 minutes in length, others 40, others 50. In questioning students, I learned that some instrumental teachers operated on this basis while others adhered to a strict time schedule.

Indeed, this lack of concern over punctuality or time is a regular occurrence in Cuban society. For example, with my private flute and conga teachers, lessons lasted until we finished the materials that we needed to cover that day. On some occasions, lessons lasted less than one hour; on other occasions, they would be longer than two hours. The freedom to work without concern for time seemed like a luxury for me during these private lessons. Unlike me, several of the flute students at *la EVA* felt that they were often being shortchanged in terms of their lesson time.

Perceived Strengths

Throughout my career as a music educator, I have been involved as a mentor teacher for numerous student teachers and interns. I have worked as a student teacher facilitator for three Canadian universities. As a result of this experience, I believe that I have a good understanding of the skills that a novice teacher should posses. Therefore, I felt that I was able to determine the strengths and weaknesses of Rosa's pedagogical practices viewed from my perspective as an educator of pre-service teachers in North America. In my opinion, Rosa embodied several qualities associated with fine teaching.

Rosa displayed a good knowledge of her subject area. She is well versed in the repertoire of her instrument and has a formidable knowledge of flute technique. She has a good understanding of the articulation, breathing, and proper posture needed to produce a good flute sound. In addition, she has strong rhythmic and *solféo* skills along with a competent knowledge of music theory and history.

Rosa is a musical player who has an interest in developing her own personal skills as a flutist. During Phase 1 of data collection, Rosa attended a one-week professional development seminar in Havana offered by nationally respected Cuban pedagogues. In addition, she regularly questioned me about flute techniques and teaching methodologies. Interestingly, other members of the teaching community in Santiago stated that Rosa rarely questioned them about pedagogy or teaching practices. While I was observing her teaching, Rosa consistently exhibited a passion for her instrument.

So, too, did Rosa reveal a passion for her students. This passion was indicated in various ways ranging from being very *cariñoso* (affectionate) to donating time outside of the regularly scheduled school day to assist students preparing for exams or auditions. Rosa also made efforts to contact parents to inform them of their children's progress.

Rosa displayed many professional qualities associated with masterful teaching. She was prepared for lessons, she rigorously followed the curriculum, and she was reflective in her practice. Her dealings with administration and colleagues were of a professional nature and she was quick to compliment the work of her fellow teachers. Rosa was open to criticism of her teaching and was willing to incorporate new strategies into her teaching repertoire.

Within her classroom, Rosa emphasized several particular aspects of flute playing. These aspects I found were also emphasized by the other wind teachers in her department. Especially with younger students, Rosa was relentless in terms of ensuring that they had proper posture and *respiración* (breathing). All students were taught to breathe silently through their noses. Flutes had to be held in a position that was parallel the floor. Hand positions had to be relaxed and fingers needed to stay in close proximity to the keys. Students were constantly reminded of these factors in their lessons.

Most lessons would begin with a review of technical exercises such as scales, arpeggios and études. Students would play through their required materials while Rosa commented primarily on their posture and breathing. Great emphasis was placed on completing the scales in one breath and keeping the rhythm steady. With studies or études, students would usually play the works from beginning to end. Afterwards, Rosa would comment primarily on articulations, breathing, and dynamics.

Lessons would finish with concert material. In order to assist students, Rosa would frequently have students sing difficult sections using *solféo* syllables. Like many teachers with whom I came in contact, Rosa placed great emphasis upon the ability to sight sing the pieces. Often, Rosa would sight sing sections for her students, preferring this to playing on her flute.

In sections where students were experiencing difficulties with rhythms, again, like many other Cuban pedagogues with whom I came in contact, Rosa would maintain the beat by tapping her foot or by counting out loud. With a particularly difficult rhythm, students would be asked to identify the duration of the notes and then use their skills to tap or sing the rhythm. For their age and skill level, Cuban students had rhythmic reading skills comparable to North American students.

Never did I see Rosa, or any other Cuban music teacher use a metronome. I gave an electronic metronome to a Cuban music teacher at one point. He was fascinated by the apparatus, never having seen one before, and asked me to show him how to use it.

I found it intriguing that none of the Cuban music teachers owned or used metronomes. Perhaps what I found the most intriguing was the highly developed sense of internal rhythm that most of them seem to possess. All of the Cuban music teachers whom I observed encouraged their students to tap the beat while they were practicing.

This appeared to be a very well learned and automated skill for most of the students with whom I came in contact.

During lessons, teachers would repeatedly be tapping or counting the beat for their students. This I observed much more than I had observed in North American classrooms. Interestingly, by the end of Phase 2 of data collection, I found that my internal rhythm had greatly improved. Some of this improvement I attributed to daily listening to the rhythmically complex popular music of Cuba. Some of this improvement I attributed to my salsa dancing and flute lessons.

Another unique aspect found in Rosa's teaching was her emphasis on expanding the range of her students at an early stage. Range is mandated by the national curriculum. By the beginning of their third year, students must be able to play with good sound through the entire range of their instruments. For flute students, this means being able to play from middle C, the lowest note on the instrument, through to high C, three octaves above (C_4 to C_7).

Again, as mandated by the curriculum, students are introduced to the extremes of their instrument's range earlier than their North American counterparts. Technical exercises, especially in the third year of study, are rigorous and ensure that students have technical fluidity over the entire range of the instrument. For example, rather than playing scales from root to root (Do to Do), students are required to play scales starting on the lowest root available, for example F, then working up to the highest note contained in the scale (high C). Students must play the entire ascending scale in one breath and the entire descending scale in one breath. This early expansion of range was found in the curricular requirements of most of the other wind instrument classes that I observed (*e.g.*, saxophone, trumpet).

As further mandated by the curriculum, Rosa stressed articulation skills with her young students. All scales and arpeggios were to be practiced using four articulations over the entire range of the technical exercise. Students were to complete the exercises: (a) *picada* (all tongued); (b) *ligada* (all slurred); (c) *2 picada, 2 ligada* (2 tongued, 2 slurred); and (d) *2 ligada, 2 picada* (2 slurred, 2 tongued). With these demanding requirements in terms of range and articulation, students rapidly developed technical prowess. When questioned about the stress on technical skills, many students, along with Rosa herself, felt that the curriculum placed too much emphasis upon technical development, especially in the beginning stages.

Perceived Weaknesses

There is no mentoring system available for new teachers in Cuban music schools. As a first year teacher at *la EVA*, Rosa relied upon the pedagogical training that she received in her final years of music school, her own experience as a student, and her creativity. Taking into consideration her status as a first year teacher, there were nonetheless several aspects to Rosa's teaching that I found to be weak.

First, Rosa rarely played her flute for her students. During the two months that I spent in her classroom, I heard her play examples on two occasions. In many instances, problems that her students were experiencing, I felt, could have been easily remedied by playing an example. Granted, many teachers do not play or sing for their students, but in this situation, I felt that it could have proved very beneficial.

Second, Rosa had difficulties isolating a concept, dividing it into small pieces and presenting these components in logical order to her students. For example, Rosa would tell her pupils to practice but would never demonstrate or describe to them exactly how to go about practicing. This I discovered when I gave supplementary lessons to two of her students.

In my lessons with Diana and Ana, I had them work on their scales and arpeggios. Each time the students made a mistake, they returned to the beginning of the scale to start again. Invariably, they would stumble at the same section as before and then restart from the beginning. This process would be repeated over and over.

Through repeated observation of this phenomenon, I concluded that Rosa's students did not know how to isolate and drill problem areas. Not once in her classroom did I observe her teach students how to practice difficult sections. The majority of her students had the tendency to repeat selections from the beginning and not work on problem sections.

Repeatedly, Rosa told me that she disliked teaching her weaker students. Indeed, her stronger students did receive more classroom time than her weaker ones. Often, Rosa would complain to me that her weaker students were more difficult to teach and that she found them extremely tiring. She would complain of headaches at the end of their lessons.

I felt that Rosa's inability to identify the problems that her students were having was at the core of her stress and frustration. In her lessons, Rosa was extremely negative with Diana for example, telling her she needed to practice more, breathe correctly, hold her flute up, and put more air into the instrument. There were few positive comments given to Diana. Throughout my observation of Rosa in her work with Diana, I did not see an attempt to teach Diana the new techniques that she needed to learn. I observed this same tendency with Rosa's other weak students.

At the request of her mother, I worked extensively with Diana outside of class time. Within the first lesson I learned that, despite a formidable natural talent, Diana did not display much of the dedication and drive needed to succeed on the instrument. As an experienced teacher, even I found Diana a challenge to teach. She was frequently distracted in lessons, staring off and not paying attention while I was explaining concepts to her. She constantly looked to her mother for affirmation during her lessons, and would frequently return to her lessons not having practiced for more than 15 minutes throughout the week.

Over time, I came to realize that Diana was indeed a capable player. Techniques that I found worked well with her included generous amounts of positive reinforcement, excessive drill disguised as "fun" exercises, and expressing that I felt she could always do better than what she was giving me in the lesson. Specifically, we worked on her breathing, tone quality, and range, all of which were extremely poor. The results, over one month of arduous work, were impressive. Diana became more interested in flute playing and extremely proud of her success. In many ways, I felt that Rosa had not worked hard enough with Diana, and her other weak students, to demand these results.

My belief that Rosa could have demanded more of her students was reinforced by her colleagues during performance examinations in March. Based upon the performance of her students and what had been observed throughout the term, the members of the examination jury gave Rosa feedback with respect to her teaching. A discussion ensued that was of a constructive nature in order to help Rosa better her teaching.

Members of the examining jury, which consisted of several of the teachers from the woodwind department, suggested that Rosa needed to put her weaker students on a harder program. They stated that she needed to push her beginner students more and be more demanding of them, especially in terms of technical requirements. The department head, a clarinet teacher whose room was adjacent to the flute *aula,* stated that he felt that

Rosa had abandoned working on technique with her students shortly after I had arrived. Once I was in her classroom observing, he felt that Rosa had begun to place too much emphasis upon repertoire with her students.

I believed that the comments of the department head were an accurate description. Shortly after I arrived to observe Rosa in her classroom, I took on the role of accompanist. Accompanists were becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain for the students of *la EVA* because of low pay and transportation difficulties in reaching the school. I began to work with the students on a daily basis as their accompanist in preparation for the upcoming concert sponsored by the woodwind department. For many of the students, including those in their third year of study, this was their first experience with a pianist.

As a result of my presence, many of the subsequent lessons with Rosa's students consisted of working only on their pieces for the performance. In their lessons, the majority of the students did not complete their technical requirements and études as they had been doing throughout the year. Instead, students worked on their repertoire selections.

Implied in conversations outside of the examination period, rather than stated directly to Rosa, a further concern arose with respect to Rosa's organizational skills as a teacher and her contact with parents. This concern was exposed when the department head stated that he was surprised that only 3 out of Maria's 11 students had performed at the concluding Spring Festival at the school.

Parents of flute students had complained to me that they had insufficient knowledge about the festival. In some cases, children who wanted to perform in the concert did not receive more than one day's notice to prepare for the presentation. The department head felt that more of Rosa's students should have performed in the Spring Festival. Overall, the committee and the department head appeared to be supportive of Rosa's teaching practices but they clearly targeted areas in which she needed to improve.

Figure 20: The courtyard at *CES.*

School Information

This section provides an depth look at the *nivel médio* or secondary level music school in Santiago *Conservatorio "Esteban Salas"* (*CES*). This section is divided in two subsections: (a) an overall description of the school (*e.g.*, physical setting, course offerings, an overview of the teaching and student populations); and (b) a case study of one of the music teachers at the school (woodwind department). An analysis of the music teacher's philosophy and pedagogical practices as well as information relating to his musical preparation and background is included.

It is at the *nivel médio* level that the Cuban music education system begins to excel. Throughout my two months observing at *CES*, I was repeatedly impressed by the skill levels and dedication of the conservatory's faculty members. I was also impressed by the skill levels and dedication of its students. Though many similarities (*e.g.*, organizational aspects, student body, teaching body) were found between *la EVA* and *CES*, factors unique to *CES* were found to influence the pedagogical practices of this *nivel médio* institution.

Background

Conservatorio "Esteban Salas" is the only *nivel médio* music school in the province of Santiago. In addition to providing music instruction to the inhabitants of its home province, the school draws many of its students from the surrounding provinces of Holguín, Granma, Las Tunas, and Guantánamo. With the city of Santiago ranking as the second largest in the country, the conservatory is of national importance in that it provides a steady stream of talented students to the *nivel superior* institute, *el ISA*, in Havana.

The school has been in operation for over 40 years serving first as a *nivel básico* institute and later, with the expansion of the conservatory system in the 1970s, increasing its status to that of a *nivel médio* institute. Unlike *la EVA*, which was built specifically for the purpose of functioning as a fine arts school, *CES* is housed in a former colonial mansion.

CES offers music and full matriculation courses for students who wish to pursue a career in music. Beginning in their Grade 10 year, students complete four years of study in order to graduate from the institution. After fulfilling these requirements, students are considered to be music professionals and can be employed in the nation's professional orchestras, bands, and choirs. Graduates of the school may also be employed as teachers in the various state-sponsored music schools throughout the nation. Graduates may also audition for entrance into the university level or *nivel superior* music schools in Camagüey and Havana.

Unlike *la EVA*, which is governed by *MINED*, *CES* falls under the umbrella of the *MINCULT*. Whereas this distinction affects the administration of the school, it has little influence upon the program of studies offered as all Cuban music schools follow a nationally determined curriculum. Currently, a total of 148 students attend *CES*. The conservatory employs 53 *plantillo* or full-salaried teachers as well as 67 contract teachers. According to school administration, some teachers are classified under both categories.

Location and Physical Description

Figure 21: Students and townspeople peering into the grand front room at *CES*.

Located in the downtown business sector of Santiago, *CES* is an integral part of the city core. The main instructional building for music classes at *CES* is situated on a quiet street two blocks from the central city square. The school is within easy walking distance to major commercial and business areas of Santiago as well as several important museums and tourist attractions.

Because the school is only a block from these tourist attractions, some international visitors to the country could easily stumble upon the conservatory, attracted perhaps by music emanating from its open windows and doors. A large amount of pedestrian traffic passes by the school each day, but the street does not have much vehicular traffic. Some bicycles, motorcycles, and cars do pass the school but the street is not a major downtown thoroughfare.

Approaching the school, one can often see its gold and white uniformed students lounging outside the facility awaiting their lessons. Some sit with friends in shady areas, instruments in hand. Others stand in the street chatting with teachers or parents. Facing the school is the community outreach or *superación* facility where adults, already active as professional musicians, can return for additional training. Teachers, employed by both of these facilities, can be seen crossing from one building to the other throughout the day. On the corner sits the remains of a building formerly used as the percussion studio. Slated to be demolished, the building, consisting of four crumbling walls without a roof, sports some colourful graffiti and pro-revolutionary slogans.

The *CES* building is constructed of concrete blocks and is highlighted by its daunting colonial wooden doors and windows. Painted pale pink with beige trim, the edifice blends in well with the other façades of the neighbourhood. A second-floor balcony, with grillwork railings, gives a vantage point for administrators to look out onto the downtown community. Decorative urns and fenials add interest to the roof line.

Entering the building via a small opening in the large double doors, one first passes into a narrow hallway. Adorned with a few ornate chairs, a pedestal table and a statue, the hallway serves as a meeting place for students, teachers, and parents. A few steps further, one is greeted by the school's *concierge* seated at a small table equipped with a telephone. A few chairs surround the desk so that visitors and faculty may sit to converse with the *concierge*. Behind the desk is a large ornate wooden staircase leading to the second floor administrative offices of the Principal and Vice-Principal.

The building is constructed in a "U" shape with a central courtyard open to the elements. A concrete wall, covered by a brightly coloured mural, encloses the far end of the property. One can enter the back area of the property, a hilly open space that is used mainly for storage, through an opening in this wall. The majority of the building is one story with the administrative offices occupying the small second floor.

Located a few steps up on either side of the courtyard are the classrooms. A narrow tiled hallway, built in the atrium style and exposed to the elements, runs in front of the classrooms allowing students access to the various *aulas*. Tiled floors and decorative metal railings highlight these passageways.

The courtyard serves both as a meeting place and open air practice room. Shade trees provide solace for those trying to escape the tropical heat, while concrete benches provide an opportunity to rest. Planters are filled with tropical greenery. Throughout the day many students pause to discuss their progress, warm-up before their lessons, or complete assignments.

The focal point of the building is the grand room located at the front of the former mansion. Originally a space intended for receiving visitors, this area is currently used for many different functions. Throughout the week the room is made use of as an *aula* where students can be accompanied in their lessons on one of the school's better grand pianos.

During examination time, the room is used as a testing area. The room also is used as a rehearsal hall for the school choirs and as a performance space for graduation recitals.

The grand front room, like the rest of the school, is starkly decorated. A few pieces of art hang on the walls. The room is furnished with a few chairs and a piano. Potted palms are interspersed throughout. Sparsely filled, the most striking feature of the room is the ceiling.

All of the ceilings in *CES* are built in the colonial style and are over ten feet in height in order to facilitate air flow. The wooden ceiling of the grand room is unique in that it is ornately carved. Once in a state of disrepair, the ceiling was recently restored to its original beauty and is the highlight of the building. Antique chandeliers provide lighting to the space.

As found in *la EVA*, classrooms are also starkly decorated and minimally furnished. Typically, rooms used for private instrumental lessons contain a piano, a few wooden chairs and, on occasion, a table and blackboard. Music stands are few in number.

Of note is the lack of supplies in the classical percussion room. Non-Cuban percussion instruments owned by the school include a set of chimes, a xylophone, a gong, four timpani, and a few small hand-percussion instruments. Percussion students rely on homemade wooden practice pads to serve as snare drums. Percussion teachers bring their drums from home for their students to practice on prior to examinations. A separate room houses the Cuban percussion instruments owned by the school.

Classrooms used for larger classes, such as music history and *solféo*, are also sparsely furnished and contain few of the amenities found in North American classrooms, such as telephones, computers, intercoms, televisions or file cabinets. Again, there is a notable lack of print materials such as paper supplies and books. Lighting is poor and rooms that used to have air conditioners now rely on open windows for air circulation.

Space is at a premium in this facility. As found with the courtyard and grand room, *aulas* are used for many purposes. For example, the percussion room, a larger *aula* at the back of the building, is extensively used during the month of June for auditions. The back open storage area is both a practice room and teaching space for percussion students. Teachers who live in close proximity to the school are encouraged to offer courses such as *solféo* in their homes to alleviate some of the scheduling problems within the facility. Matriculation courses are taught in a separate building around the corner.

Facility Limitations

Figure 22: A student practicing in the courtyard at *CES*.

There is a unique sound that I experienced when I entered *CES*. On my preliminary visits to the school, I found this sound to be annoying and distracting. Throughout the two months that I observed classes and interviewed participants, I found this sound to be a comfort as I began to understand it as a unique Cuban aural experience.

The sound that I experienced entering *CES* was one of cacophony. Sitting in the main room or the courtyard, I was exposed to a din of scales, études, and compositions performed on the entire complement of instruments taught at the facility. The excerpts ranged from classical concertos to contemporary choral music; from jazz licks to Afro-Cuban rhythms; from solo arias to guitar ensembles. All blended together to create an atmosphere that was truly Cuban.

Sound transmission, due to a lack of insulation, poor construction, and open windows and doors, was even more prevalent at *CES* than at *la EVA*. In all of the classrooms I collected data, unimpeded sound transmission was a constant. Again, as found at *la EVA*, few students and teachers complained openly about it.

On rare occasions, I observed teachers leaving their rooms to ask students to move to a different practice space farther away from where they were giving lessons. On one occasion, I observed a lesson where the teacher waited to proceed with his student until a particularly high trumpet passage had been completed in a nearby *aula*. In general, students and teachers alike appeared to maintain impressive levels of concentration despite their sound environment.

Sound problems were more severe at *CES* than *la EVA* for three reasons. First, the school was overcrowded. The sheer number of students and faculty members resulted in a high amount of noise. Second, because the facility is not contained in several multi-storied buildings interspersed throughout a large property such as *la EVA*, levels of sound transmission were even higher. Third, because the school is located in the city center and windows are open to the environment, sound pollution from the downtown business core entered the school, further adding to the cacophony.

Pedagogically, as seen at the *nivel básico* level, the transmission of sound appeared to have positive benefits at the the *nivel médio* level. Students needed to develop an even higher level of concentration than was necessary at *la EVA*. The most notable situation that I experienced was a young clarinet student performing the Weber Clarinet Concerto with piano accompaniment in the grand room. Telephones were ringing, students were moving to their next class, parents were entering to pick up their children, and passing pedestrians were stopping at open windows to listen. Add to these distractions the cacophony of students practicing and receiving lessons, and one is impressed by the performer's ability to concentrate.

As seen at *la EVA*, sound leakage also had the effect of keeping instrumental teachers abreast of the development of other students within their department. For example, at *CES* the two flute teachers frequently taught in adjacent *aulas*. Both teachers could hear what their colleague's students were working on and how well they were doing. So too could department heads easily follow the programs being offered by the various teachers in their department.

Unlike at the fine arts school, access to classrooms was not found to be a concern at the secondary level conservatory. Access to classrooms was always easily obtained and not once in my data collection did I experience teachers being locked out of their classrooms. In addition, a loss of lesson time due to transportation difficulties in reaching the school was not observed at this centrally located conservatory.

In my explorations of the compound, I observed that *la EVA* had several *aulas* that had been declared unusable. Doors had boards nailed across them in order to prevent students from trespassing. In these *aulas,* I found a number of unused, abandoned pianos. With the shortage of available space at *CES*, I did not observe any unused classrooms. I did, however, encounter a number of pianos, in non-working order, stored in the hallways of the facility. Again, choosing to maintain my credibility as a researcher, I decided not to delve further into this issue. I did not take photographs, video footage, or question teachers about these instruments.

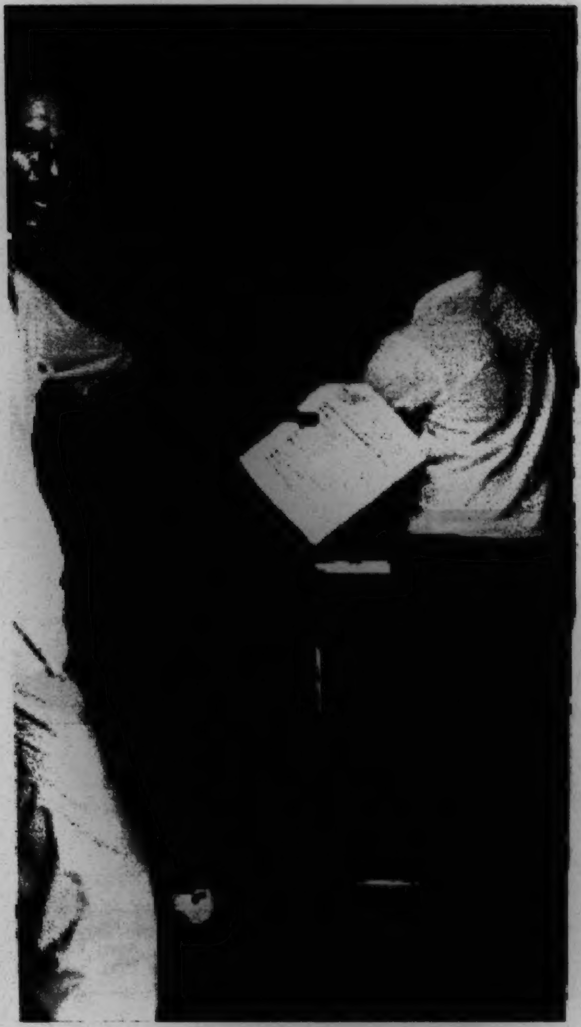

Figure 23: Looking in on students in the percussion room at *CES*.

In appearance, students at *CES* were more mature versions of those found at *la EVA*. Like the general Cuban population, students came from a mixed racial background with both African and Iberian roots. As found in every secondary school in the country, students at this *nivel médio* conservatory sport gold and white uniforms. Interestingly, the female students at *CES* informed me that, over recent years, they had been shortening their skirts to well above the recommended length. As a result, the acceptable skirt length was much shorter than that of five years ago. As found at the *nivel básico* level, male students attend school dressed in full length gold trousers and short-sleeved white shirts as mandated by the state.

The student body at *CES*, in comparison to equivalent schools in North America, was very conservative in its appearance. Though some students did have body piercings and tattoos, they were conservative in style. Hair styles were conservative, as was the makeup of female students. Attention to personal hygiene was important and students could often be seen combing each other's hair or assisting with makeup in public spaces.

I asked several of the teachers at *CES* if particular instruments attracted students of a specific gender. Most said that this had changed over the years. During the 1960s, girls tended to stay away from playing certain instruments. For example, the saxophone, the trombone, and the double bass were considered not to be instrument choices for female students at that time. Today, female students are free to choose any of these instruments and are often encouraged to select those typically considered to be "non-feminine."

Interestingly, one flute teacher informed me that there currently was a wave of strong female flutists at the school. Traditionally in Cuba, he informed me, the flute was considered to be a male instrument. In my dealings with secondary students in Canada, I found exactly the opposite. Traditionally in Canadian secondary schools, the flute was considered to be a choice for female students. In recent years, I have noted a larger number of male students selecting the flute.

A strong sense of camaraderie was evident among the student body at *CES*. This camaraderie was manifested in several different ways. For example, students supported each other by attending one another's lessons. Often, fellow students volunteered to hold music for their colleagues or turn pages for accompanists. In instances where instruments needed repairs, students lent fellow students their instruments.

A large attendance at fourth-year recitals, the final performance requirement for graduation, further demonstrated the support that students gave to their fellow students. More often that not, these recitals were followed by a reception at the graduating student's home where food, alcohol, and dancing were offered. This may further have accounted for the excellent attendance at graduation recitals. Cuban society is a sharing society, so this sense of camaraderie was not unique to the school.

In general, I found students at *CES* were very mature in their comportment. They appeared quite interested in their subject areas and came to their lessons well prepared. The graduating students with whom I came in contact demonstrated a passion for their instruments and a sense of dedication to their careers as professional musicians in Cuba.

Teaching Body

In terms of gender, racial background, and musical preparation, the teachers at *CES* were similar to those at *La EVA*. The faculty at *CES* were mature and experienced professionals. Several of the teachers that I met at *CES* had over 20 years of experience working in the music schools of Cuba. Many of the experienced teachers at the facility have had, and continue to have, long and distinguished performing careers in the community's orchestras, bands, choirs, and performing ensembles.

In recent years in Santiago, there has been a shift of experienced teachers from the *nivel básico* conservatories up to the *nivel médio* level. This shift has caused some deficiencies at the lower level and administrators are working hard to remedy this problem. As a result, some teachers working at *CES* concurrently teach at *EMLF*. *EMLF* is located in close proximity to *CES*, which enables teachers to easily move between the two.

Teachers at the *nivel médio* conservatory posses a variety of qualifications. As seen at *la EVA*, the majority have earned a *nivel médi*o certificate with the minority having earned certificates from the *nivel superio*r school or the Pedagogical Institute. There are a few teachers at *CES* who are fulfilling their social services requirements. Teachers in this stream however are generally sent to the *nivel básico* institutions in order to gain some experience prior to receiving jobs at the *nivel médio* schools.

In some instances, teachers graduating from *CES* return to teach at the school the following year. Such is the case with one of the percussion teachers at *CES*. The manner in which teachers and students at the school interact with one another facilitates this transition from student to teacher.

The well-determined role distinction between teacher and students seen in North America was not so prevalent in Cuban secondary music schools. For example, at the end of the school year, teachers and students attended numerous receptions following graduation recitals. On these occasions, it was common to see both students and teachers imbibing alcoholic beverages. It was common to see male teachers asking female students to dance. Students may see their teachers in a wider variety of social situations than is the norm in North America.

Though it could be difficult to secure teachers for some instruments, for the most part, teaching posts at *CES* are coveted positions and there are few vacancies at school. Many *nivel básico* teachers strive to move up to teach at the *nivel médio* level. For economic reasons, however, many *nivel médio* music educators choose to continuing teaching after they are eligible for retirement (age 55 for women and 60 for men), thereby limiting the numbers of available posts.

The average salary for a full time employee at *CES* is 420 pesos per month ($15.00 U.S.). With the average retirement stipend from the federal government being less than half of that amount, many experienced teachers elect to continue teaching well into their retirement years. As one female teacher at *CES*, Linda, explained to me, retirement holds few benefits.

Since the fall of the Eastern Bloc and reduced funding for schools, parents with children in music schools are increasingly required to buy instruments for their students. Linda had to sacrifice $250.00 U.S. of her retirement savings in order to buy her son an alto saxophone. Later, in order for him to get work in the tourist locations, she did the same to buy him a tenor saxophone. With the majority of her savings used to support her son, little is left for her retirement. If she retires at age 55, Linda will not be able to afford to travel, even to a neighbouring province. With clothing and many food prices now being in American dollars, she cannot afford a loss of income. As long as Linda is in good health and is able to be useful, she plans to continue to work well into her retirement years.

Organization and Timetabling

All students enrolled at *nivel médio* institutions in Cuba follow a nationally mandated curriculum. As at the *nivel básico* level, students are given few choices in terms of their courses. Again, as found at *la EVA*, mornings, for the most part, are reserved for instruction in matriculation subjects such as Mathematics, English, and Spanish, while afternoons are reserved for music study. This scheduling enables teachers to rehearse with the various professional ensembles in the city while maintaining a full teaching load at the conservatory.

All general population Cuban students graduating from *nivel médio* schools must complete two final examinations, Mathematics and History, in order to receive their diploma. If a student wishes to pursue a career in a specific area at the university level, s/he must complete final examinations in various other subjects. For example, students wishing to gain entrance into the field of medicine must additionally write examinations in all the sciences. Final examinations are staged at the same time and on the same day across the nation, and account for 50% of the student's final grade.

Students wishing to continue their music education at the *nivel superior* must write the matriculation exams for History and Mathematics in order to continue on to the *nivel superior*. Admission to *el ISA* in Havana is determined on a student's matriculation grades as well as his/her grades in the various music subjects.

Students must travel to Havana to complete an audition, interview, and series of exams in order to be accepted into the university level music facility. The audition procedure is similar to that required of students wishing to enter into *CES*. During data collection, of the 13 students who were graduating from *CES*, 11 traveled to Havana to audition at *el ISA*. Of these 11, 7 were accepted into the program. Auditions for *el ISA* occur in late May or early June.

Instruction in all subject areas at *CES* continues to the month of May. Beginning in May, a series of final examinations takes place with the last examinations being in the matriculation subject areas. Unlike in North America, there is no one final day of classes followed by an examination period. Courses are gradually phased out, ending with their final examinations throughout the months of May and June.

Teachers need to be in attendance at the school until the end of June, whereas students no longer are required to come to *CES* once they have completed their final exams. Throughout the spring months, teachers are involved in the audition procedure for prospective students as well as serving as jury members for graduation recitals. Some teachers also use this time to take their *conjuntos* or performing ensembles on tours to the surrounding communities.

During July, teachers do not need to be in attendance at the school but must complete a detailed program of studies for their students for the upcoming academic year. Once these documents have been accepted by the school administration, teachers are free to take their leave for the summer.

The Special Plan

In the spring, parents petition instrumental teachers at *CES* to have their children enrolled in the Special Plan at the school. The Special Plan is a one-year accelerated course covering all curricular materials taught at the *nivel básico* level. Generally, students accepted into the Special Plan have some prior musical training. Often they are former students from *EMLF* wishing to learn a new instrument.

Students audition for the various instrumental teachers in order to be accepted into the Special Plan. Because the students are under great pressure to learn at an accelerated pace, the teachers are highly selective. Students selected must demonstrate an affinity for the new instrument they have selected, a strong work ethic, and a high level of self-discipline.

Due to the heavy requirements of the program, students wishing to be enrolled as Special Plan students must begin their study in the spring prior to their official entry into the program. Beginning in May, students attend two 60-minute lessons per week to learn the fundamentals of their instrument. Teachers of Special Plan students must spend many additional hours outside of their regular teaching day in order to prepare these students for the upcoming academic year.

Special Plan students are an important factor at *CES*. For example, of the nine students for whom Pedro, the senior flute teacher at *CES*, was responsible, seven had come through the Special Plan. In an interview, Pedro stated that whereas the students enrolled in the Special Plan require substantial extra work on his part, they are enjoyable to teach in that they arrive in his classroom with no previously learned bad playing habits. On the other hand, Pedro felt that students graduating from the Special Plan were lacking in musical maturity compared to those who had attended a *nivel básico* conservatory.

With the recent fluctuations in teachers at *la EVA*, Pedro felt that the quality of flute students auditioning for entrance into *CES* had been declining. In particular, Pedro felt that students were lacking in technique, had relatively little experience sight reading, and tended to have many embouchure problems. By allowing students to enter through the Special Plan, Pedro believed that he could have more control over the skill level of students wishing to enter into the *nivel médio* institution. At the end of their year of study, students enrolled in the Special Plan must audition in order to be accepted as full-time *nivel médio* students at *CES*.

Audition Procedures

Students at *nivel básico* institutions throughout Cuba who wish to continue their music education spend their final term of study preparing for auditions to the *nivel médio* institutions. Places in the secondary level institutions are limited and acceptance to the program depends on the number of instruments available for students to play and the number of openings teachers have in their timetables. As a result, the audition procedure is an arduous event.

In order to be admitted to *CES*, prospective students must undergo a series of written examinations, playing/singing exams, and an interview. This process occurs over a period of two days in the early weeks of June. Teachers participating in auditions are exempted from their rehearsals with the various orchestras, bands, and choirs in order to attend. *CES* runs two rounds of auditions during the same week to accommodate students travelling from the various neighbouring provinces. During the day that I observed the audition procedure, approximately 40 students were auditioning for entry to *CES*. I was informed that a smaller number auditioned on the subsequent round. It was estimated that there would be 40 places available at the school for the following year.

The performance aspect of the audition is similar to a final exam. Students, who enter with their teacher and accompanist, are asked to play a selection of major and minor scales, arpeggios, and dominant seventh chords. Following these technical requirements, students are asked to play two studies from their étude book, followed by one or two repertoire selections with piano accompaniment. Juries, made up of teachers from the various departments, can number as high as nine members. A final grade, which is not announced to the student, is agreed upon by the various jury members for each student that auditions.

Following their performance exams, students complete a written theory exam. A series of two *solféo* exams must also be taken, the first consists of dictation, the second of sight singing. Sight singing exams for students wishing to enter into the choral conducting or theory/*solféo* stream are more difficult than those for prospective instrumental students. Appendix C contains a copy of a sight singing exam observed during data collection.

On the second day of auditions, students complete a piano exam as well as a music history exam. The day concludes with the prospective student being interviewed by school representatives. Once all students have completed the audition procedure, the successful candidates are notified that they have been accepted into the conservatory.

In talking with one of the senior faculty members of *CES*, I was informed that fewer students are auditioning for entry into the school than in previous years. In the past, the auditions would frequently continue until the late evening; today, teachers can return home in time for their evening meal. An expansion of the conservatory system in the country is allowing more spaces for students at the *nivel médio* conservatories, thereby reducing pressure on the Santiago school.

Teachers of prospective *CES* students often attend the first day of the auditions, as do administrators from the various *nivel básico* schools. The auditions provide an excellent opportunity for professional development, and keep communication lines open between the music schools. Food and drink are provided to the faculty members involved in the audition process. Due to previous difficulties, parents of prospective students are not allowed to attend the auditions.

Required Courses

Courses offered at *CES* are a natural extension of those offered at the *nivel básico* level and there is excellent continuity between the two levels. There are no choices offered to students in matriculation subjects. Compulsory matriculation subjects for all *CES* students are Spanish, English, History, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Geography, and Physical Education.

Minimal subject choice is available in the area of music. Students at *CES* must complete courses in their major instrument, music history, music theory, *solféo,* and private piano instruction. In addition, students must be members of the choir for a minimum of two years; four if they are in the theory/*solféo* or choral conducting option. Students must be members of a *conjunto* or performing ensemble beginning in their third year. Courses are offered twice-weekly for 45-50 minutes each session.

Students begin their practica in their third year at the conservatory. Practica are twofold, with a performance and pedagogy stream. The performance practicum involves students being placed in the various state-sponsored professional ensembles (the *OSO*, *la Banda*). The pedagogy practicum involves students being placed with mentor teachers in the various music schools in the city.

Performance ensembles at *CES* are more varied than those at *la EVA*. The school has a *camarata* string orchestra that on occasion programs selections that include woodwind instruments. In addition, the school has a compulsory flute choir and a big band. There was a guitar ensemble in previous years but this is no longer available.

Choirs at the school include one female chorus, one male chorus, and a mixed chamber choir.

Conjuntos are established for third- and fourth-year students. These small ensembles exist in a wide variety of combinations. *Conjuntos* can be duos, trios, or quartets of like or mixed instruments. Previously, there was a *conjunto* that specialized in popular Cuban music but this is no longer offered. *Conjunto* rehearsals are slotted in open spots in the students' timetables when they do not have private music instruction.

Graduation Recitals

Figure 24: A *conjunto* of *CES* students performing in a graduation recital at the school.

In their final year of study at *CES*, each student must give a 60-minute recital in order to graduate. Recitals are held beginning in the month of May through to the early weeks of June. Once a student has completed his/her final recital, s/he is no longer required to attend private instrument lessons. Recitals are usually held in the afternoon either at the formal concert hall, *Sala Dolores*, or in the grand room at the conservatory. Often two recitals will be held on the same afternoon, with a brief pause between the two. Admission is free.

Recital programs are varied. Most include classical concerto movements as well as portions of the canonic repertoire for the various instruments. In many cases, a somewhat "lighter" or "non-classical" selection will conclude the performance. This may include jazz or Afro-Cuban selections. Often special *conjuntos* will be formed with teachers or students arranging compositions for their unique group of instrumentalists. Some students perform the recital from memory. Accompanists are provided free of charge to all graduating students. See Appendix D for a sample graduation recital program.

A jury of *CES* teachers marks each of the recitals. As seen in the examination process throughout the school year both at *la EVA* and at CES, grades are publicly announced immediately following the performance. Grades of 100% are not uncommon.

Graduation recitals are well attended by the student body. On days when there is a graduation recital at *Sala Dolores*, the school empties. Students are very supportive of their peers, cheering and breaking into loud applause when grades are announced. In addition, the tradition is that the graduating student holds a reception immediately following the performance.

In true Cuban style, receptions are noisy and rambunctious affairs. Food, often in the form of pasta salad, buns, and cake, is sometimes provided as are beverages. Rum is often plentiful. Many receptions involve salsa dancing and some even result in an informal conga line lacing through the streets surrounding the graduate's home. As found at many Cuban parties, impromptu performances throughout the evening, involving either a song or a poem, are common. Audience members are welcome at these receptions but the partygoers predominately include classmates of the graduate, friends, and family members. Both current and former music teachers are invited to attend.

School Enrollment and Holidays

As found *nivel básico* level, pupils attending *CES* can either be enrolled as day students or *beca* students. *CES* shares its residences with *la EVA* so students must make the daily trek from the *nivel básico* institute down to the conservatory. Students from towns other than Santiago often arrange to stay in the homes of extended family members as opposed to living in the residences.

In order to allow residence students to return home, a number of extended weekends are put into the yearly schedule. These extended weekends are fewer than those seen at the *nivel básico* level. Though teachers are not required to be in attendance during these holidays, I frequently observed faculty coming to work with students on these extended weekends, especially in preparation for graduation recitals.

A Case Study of a CES Instrumental Teacher: Pedro

To gain further knowledge of the factors that influence the teaching philosophy and pedagogical practice of teachers at *CES*, a case study of Pedro, one of the senior flute teachers at *CES*, was undertaken. Pedro's background, his current living situation, his musical preparation, his professional activities, and an account of his pedagogical practices were examined. A veteran teacher with over 20 years of teaching and performing experience, Pedro is considered to be one of *CES*'s best instrumental teachers.

Personal Information

My experience working with Pedro was twofold in nature. First, during Phase 1 of data collection, I was a private flute student of Pedro. I received lessons at my home, with the exception of the first lesson that was held at *Sala Dolores*. Generally, lessons were held two times per week. Some weeks however, due to scheduling difficulties, I received only one lesson. I received 11 lessons between February 15 and March 23, 2003. Lessons ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours with 1 hour 30 minute lessons being the norm.

During Phase 2 of data collection, I did not continue my lessons with Pedro due to time constraints on his part. Instead, I observed Pedro teaching private lessons to his *nivel médio* students at *CES* and one adult student from *superación*. I attended these lessons Monday to Friday afternoons starting at 2:00 p.m. and continuing until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. My observation of Pedro's lessons at *CES* took place between May 8 and June 18, 2003.

The majority of my interviews with Pedro were of an informal nature. During Phase 1 of data collection, many of these interviews occurred before and after my lessons.

Others took place during breaks when I needed to relax my embouchure or when we paused to drink some water in the extreme tropical heat. During Phase 2 of data collection, the majority of our interviews were held prior to or immediately following Pedro's teaching at *CES*. Other interviews were held before or after graduate recitals or auditions. During both Phase 1 and Phase 2, some interviews occurred just after rehearsals with the orchestra at *Sala Dolores*.

At no time during data collection did I interview Pedro in his home. All of our interviews were held in public facilities. All of our interviews were of a private or semi-private nature. For semi-private interviews, it was generally Pedro's flute students who were in attendance. As I began to develop a rapport with Pedro, our roles reversed; he became the interviewer while I fielded questions about my life as an educator in Canada. I felt that these role reversals were very important in terms of data collection for it was towards the end of these sessions that I obtained the most poignant and enlightening data.

Family Background

At age 52, Pedro is the father of two grown sons. Married to one of the senior *solféo* teachers at *CES*, Pedro lives within walking distance of the *Sala Dolores* orchestra hall and *CES*, his two major locations of employment. Though he repeatedly stated that there is little to do in Santiago outside of work, his life is a busy one, occupied with rehearsals, teaching, performances, church, and socializing with friends.

In appearance, Pedro is of average build and stature. His roots are Iberian; however, as in many Cuban families, there are hints of African traits in his skin tone and facial features. He is a conservative dresser and generally sports long pants and a short-sleeved shirt as is the norm for professionals in Cuba. He is in relatively good health and walks to work and lessons on a regular basis.

Pedro's two sons, both in their 20s, are involved in music. His eldest son, a saxophone player, is a student at *el ISA*. In order to acquire additional money, his son is a member of a small ensemble that performs regularly at the various hotels in Havana and Veradero.

Pedro's second son, a former engineer, has recently enrolled as a flute student at the school of *superación* in Santiago. He is under the tutelage of his father. According to Pedro, his son did not enjoy working as an engineer and wished to pursue a career as a musician due to the influence of his family. In addition to taking courses, Pedro's second son has begun a fledgling business repairing flutes and saxophones. Repair supplies have been difficult to acquire, especially replacement pads and cork. The shoe-repair industry serves as his best source for supplies related to musical instrument repair.

In talking about his younger son's practice habits, Pedro feels that he should be practicing more. Pedro also stated that his eldest son did not make the best use of his time at *CES* until relatively late in his program. In either case, it appears that Pedro has had a profound musical impact on his children.

Current Status

Pedro describes himself as "*muy sério*" or a "very serious" type of person. He sees himself as sincere, deep, and not frivolous in nature. In all of my associations with him, I found Pedro to be very professional, always striving to encourage excellence both in himself and in his students. At the same time, Pedro is quick to joke or be involved in activities in order to temporarily divert himself from his professional responsibilities.

The musical community in Santiago appears to have great respect for Pedro both as a pedagogue and a person. In all of my dealings with musicians and educators in Santiago, I heard only the highest of compliments about Pedro. His skill as a flute teacher is well recognized, as is his caring attitude towards his students. He is known as a generous person who is very dedicated to his friends and family.

Outside of his professional and teaching responsibilities, Pedro likes to gather with friends, generally to cook, watch movies, or converse. Pedro says that it is difficult to find positive friends and role models in Cuba today. With the constant negativity of the press towards the United States and with the financial difficulties Cubans have endured since the fall of the Soviet Union, Pedro finds that many Cubans have become somewhat bitter or negative about their daily reality. Pedro feels that it is important to have close friends who don't talk about war but who talk about beautiful things. According to Pedro, it is important to surround oneself with friends who like to get together for great suppers, a bit of wine, great conversation, and good food.

Like many other professional artists and musicians, Pedro feels the pull of Havana, the cultural capital of the country. At this stage in his career, Pedro does not want to relocate to Havana; however, he is envious of the number of performance opportunities available to Havana musicians and audiences. Pedro feels that there are more playing opportunities in Havana that can help keep a musician motivated. He further believes that the skill level of Havana musicians is higher than in Santiago.

Like many other Santiago residents, Pedro feels that Santiago has changed substantially since the increase of the tourism industry beginning in 1990. For example, Pedro no longer likes the ambiance of downtown Santiago. He often watches what is going on in the streets as he walks to work and finds that the feel of the downtown core has changed to one that is untrustworthy and hungry for money. He frowns upon the increase in the number of street hustlers, aimed at taking advantage of the many tourists.

On Sunday mornings, after attending his regular church service, Pedro sometimes tours the downtown core, stopping at local performing venues such as the *Casa de la Trova*. Like many other Cubans with whom I came in contact, once a supporter of this night-stop, today Pedro rarely frequents this locale for live music in the evenings but does visit during the daytime. Night-time audiences at the *Trova*, previously a location featuring radical pro-Revolutionary troubadours, has changed from a predominantly local Cuban crowd to a foreign tourist crowd.

Musicians have altered their performing styles to please the foreign audience, and Pedro no longer enjoys the atmosphere of the *Casa* except during the day. In addition, the evening entrance fee to the *Trova*, set at $3.00 U.S., limits the number of Cubans entering its doors. During the day, entrance is often free. From my experience as a researcher, many of the Cubans that I encountered in the evenings at the *Casa de la Trova* were a variation of the street hustler found immediately outside its doors.

Professional Activities

Professionally, Pedro is extremely active in the musical and educational communities in Santiago. With over 20 years experience teaching at the state-run music schools and with over 30 years playing in the *OSO*, he is part of an established core of talented musicians in the area. As a flute teacher, he is recognized as having produced some of the best young players in the country.

Pedro's professional schedule is a busy one. Mornings, he rehearses with the symphony orchestra at *Sala Dolores*, the city's primary concert hall, where he is the first-chair flute player. He begins his teaching day at *CES* in the early afternoon at 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. depending upon the number of students he is required to see that day. His work day at *CES* concludes between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. Frequently, the symphony orchestra has evening concerts, both during the week and on weekends, which further extends his work day.

In addition to his *CES* students, Pedro is often asked to teach extra flute students. In some cases, these students are *nivel básico* students from *la EVA* in search of assistance. Parents approach Pedro for supplementary lessons for their children because they know him to be an excellent pedagogue. Pedro also teaches numerous foreign students on a temporary basis throughout the academic year. Many of these foreign students return to study with him in subsequent years.

Many musicians come to Cuba in search of private music lessons. It is not necessary to arrange to study with a teacher prior to arriving in Cuba. However, if one wants to study with a particular teacher, it is best to arrange this prior to arriving. If a foreign musician attends a concert and wishes to study with one of the performers, the foreigner can arrange for lessons simply by meeting the Cuban musician after the concert. Though they may have busy schedules, Cuban musicians are open to taking on foreign students as they provide additional income. There is no standard number of lessons, some students take only one lesson while others will study for months with the same teacher. The standard fee for lessons, as of the writing of this dissertation, was $5.00 U.S. for a 120-minute lesson. A similar structure also exists for foreign students who wish to take dance lessons in Cuba.

It must be noted that there were some legal concerns that arose in my lessons with Pedro. If any *Casa* inspectors were to arrive while I was having a lesson, I was to inform them that we were having an "*intercambio*" or exchange of professional ideas. According to existing rules, a *Casa* owner must pay for a special permit to allow this type of activity in the home. Rules for the *Casa* allowed visitors only in the *salon* or living room area of the house; our lessons occurred in the second floor kitchen, a prohibited area for my usage. The same concern arose with the private lessons that I gave to Rosa's two students.

Despite legal concerns, foreign students provide Pedro with excellent motivation both as a musician and as a pedagogue. In a country that severely limits travel abroad and is very isolated in comparison to its communication-filled North American neighbours, foreign students serve as a type of lifeline for many Cuban musicians. Such is the case with Pedro.

For example, Pedro has been teaching a German flutist for many years. The gentleman, like many of Pedro's foreign students, comes for lessons not only on classical flute playing but also on the Cuban charanga style of improvisation. Over the years, the two men have become fast friends.

Due to the sale of a successful business, the German student is financially "set for life." This German gentleman has bought Pedro a large supply of flute music as well as a new tenor saxophone and a bass flute. This "gifting" of instruments and supplies by foreigners to Cuban musicians is something that I frequently observed throughout my data collection. Few tourists that I came in contact with, however, were as generous as Pedro's German acquaintance.

Foreign students are important to Pedro and in turn to his students at *CES*. Not only do foreign students motivate Pedro on a musical level but they also, through their generosity, keep him abreast of current repertoire and pedagogical practices. Pedro passes on gifts from his foreign students, such as étude books and repertoire selections, to his *CES* students. For example, at the start of Phase 2 of data collection, I donated many books and repertoire selections to Pedro. By the end of Phase 2, he had already programmed two of these selections at his students' graduate recitals. He was planning to use the method books that I had given to him in his program of studies for the following academic year.

Another positive influence upon Pedro's professional career has been his friendships with other musicians and educators in the Santiago area. On one occasion, I went with Pedro to visit an old friend whom Pedro stated was one of the most positive influences in his musical life. The two had been collaborating for over 20 years on a variety of projects, many of which had resulted in international tours and teaching engagements. According to Pedro, it is always important for musicians to be learning new things. His friend, a composer, arranger, saxophone player, big band director and orchestra director, is someone who, according to Pedro, inspires him to strive to attain new musical heights.

At approximately $30.00 U.S. per month total, Pedro's salary roughly equals that of a Cuban doctor. Though by Cuban standards Pedro is considered to be well paid by his two employers Pedro supplements his income by playing in popular music groups. I noted that many Cuban symphony musicians were active, on both primary and secondary instruments, in popular and Afro-Cuban music groups. These groups not only enable musicians to experience a different type of performing situation but they create opportunities for them to travel internationally.

Much in the same way that Pedro's foreign students inspire him musically and provide him with additional materials, Pedro values the inspiration and materials that can be attained through international tours. In addition to touring abroad, Pedro is active with his various performing ensembles throughout the province of Santiago.

Personnel changes in popular Cuban groups are not uncommon. For example, one of Pedro's groups had temporarily disbanded because the piano player was on an extended tour in China. Recently, Pedro stated to me that regulations controlling international travel of musicians had become more complicated and it was becoming more difficult to obtain permission to tour. On a personal level, Pedro stated that though he had submitted two requests to tour Spain and Europe during the summer, he doubted if either would be approved.

Not only does government approval affect the travel plans of musicians, it also appears to affect their daily practice habits. In Cuba, all public concerts must be approved by *MINCULT*. *MINCULT* controls the type and nature of all musical presentations in every performing venue in the country.

Santiago musicians stated to me that they were dissatisfied with their current representatives in *MINCULT*. Their complaints included that there had been few approvals for jazz concerts and limited performing opportunities (*e.g.*, musicians were permitted to play 10-15 minute sets in a concert as opposed to being allowed to give a full 1-2 hour performance). As a result of current Ministry policy, many musicians were not motivated to form new ensembles or rehearse. Many musicians stated that the Ministry's focus on providing music favoured by the tourist crowd has had some negative affects upon their motivation and performing careers.

Figure 25: One of the poorest districts of Santiago where Pedro regularly rehearsed with his popular music group.

In our interviews, Pedro talked very briefly about his musical preparation. He did not offer information regarding the influence of his family upon his musical training nor did he discuss his musical preparation in detail. Pedro stated that he started playing as a child, entering into the *nivel básico* institution in Santiago at age 12. At that time, there were 10 flutists enrolled in the program.

For his *nivel médio* instruction, Pedro moved to Havana to enroll in one of the conservatories. With a smile, Pedro told me of the fate of his fellow flute graduates. Of his two classmates who graduated with Pedro, one had left the country while the other had gone "*loco*" or "crazy" and could be seen walking the streets of downtown Santiago asking for money. Only Pedro continues to work as a professional musician and flute teacher in Santiago.

Pedro is quick to note that he had wonderful teachers throughout his musical preparation, many of whom have either passed away or retired. He specifically highlighted a gifted *solféo* teacher with whom he studied in the army. Like many other Cuban musicians and teachers, Pedro places great importance upon strong *solféo* skills, both for his students and himself.

As an over 30-year veteran of the *OSO*, Pedro stated there there are very few occasions when he needs to practice extensively for an upcoming concert. (Leo Brower, a renowned Cuban guitarist, composer, and troubadour, in a recent visit to the *OSO*, complimented Pedro on his tone quality and playing skill, stating that he considered him to be one of the best flutists in the country.) Because he possesses such a vast knowledge of the orchestral repertoire, Pedro, though he enjoys his post in the symphony orchestra, finds there to be few musical challenges for him. Of late, an Italian director was demanding a different sound from the orchestra and Pedro was pleased to have to spend some time practicing to meet the demands of this director.

Pedro finds his greatest pleasure playing jazz and Cuban charanga music. He is self-taught as an improviser and continues to practice his skills in this area on a regular basis. In addition to playing the flute, Pedro has recently begun to play the tenor saxophone so as to increase his opportunities as a popular musician.

As a child, Pedro grew up listening extensively to jazz music. Though it is one of his preferred styles to play, he finds that his opportunities to be involved in jazz are limited in Santiago. A lack of jazz bassists and of performing opportunities for jazz groups makes it difficult for Pedro to stay motivated to rehearse this style of music.

I did have the opportunity to observe Pedro rehearse with one of his popular groups during Phase 2 of data collection. One afternoon in June, Pedro led my friend and me to one of the poorest areas of Santiago, where his group was rehearsing. As we approached the house where the rehearsal was to take place, my friend, a long time Santiago resident, grabbed my arm in an effort to protect me from any possible confrontations he feared might occur while walking in this neighbourhood.

Though the rehearsal space was located in one of the poorest districts of Santiago, the electronic equipment owned by the group's leader in no way reflected the economic setting in which the rehearsal was situated. I calculated that over $10,000 U.S. worth of equipment was stored in the house where the leader lived. The leader, a percussionist, owned the majority of the equipment. As a result of her numerous musical tours abroad, she was able to earn a significantly large amount of money in order to acquire this equipment.

The majority of the equipment that this percussionist possessed was bought abroad; Cuba does not import these items (primarily due to the U.S. embargo). Nor would there be a market for these items in Cuba as musician's salaries range well below the $40.00 U.S. mark per month. The acquisition of such high-quality equipment is impossible for musicians who work and tour only in Cuba. It is only the musicians who tour abroad and earn extra income that can afford to buy such "luxury items."

Specifically, her foreign acquisitions included a Kurtzweil keyboard, Sennheiser microphone cables, Shure microphones and stands, a multi-channel sound board, Bose speakers, and monitors. There was also an electric stand-up bass, congas, bongoes, and a drum set. The band, numbering six in total, was too large to set up in the rehearsal room, so the singer moved to an adjacent room for the duration of the rehearsal, peering through the door for cues.

This group, of which Pedro was one of the newest members, played a variety of Afro-Cuban and popular music selections. All of the musicians were professionals, mainly from the popular music scene. The rehearsal, in preparation for two upcoming concerts in communities surrounding Santiago, was efficiently run. The entire rehearsal, rather loud due to amplification, could easily be heard for several blocks and caused some neighbours to approach the house so as to observe the rehearsal process. The contrast of seeing such excellent quality sound equipment in such distinctly poor surroundings had a sobering effect upon me as a researcher.

The Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente

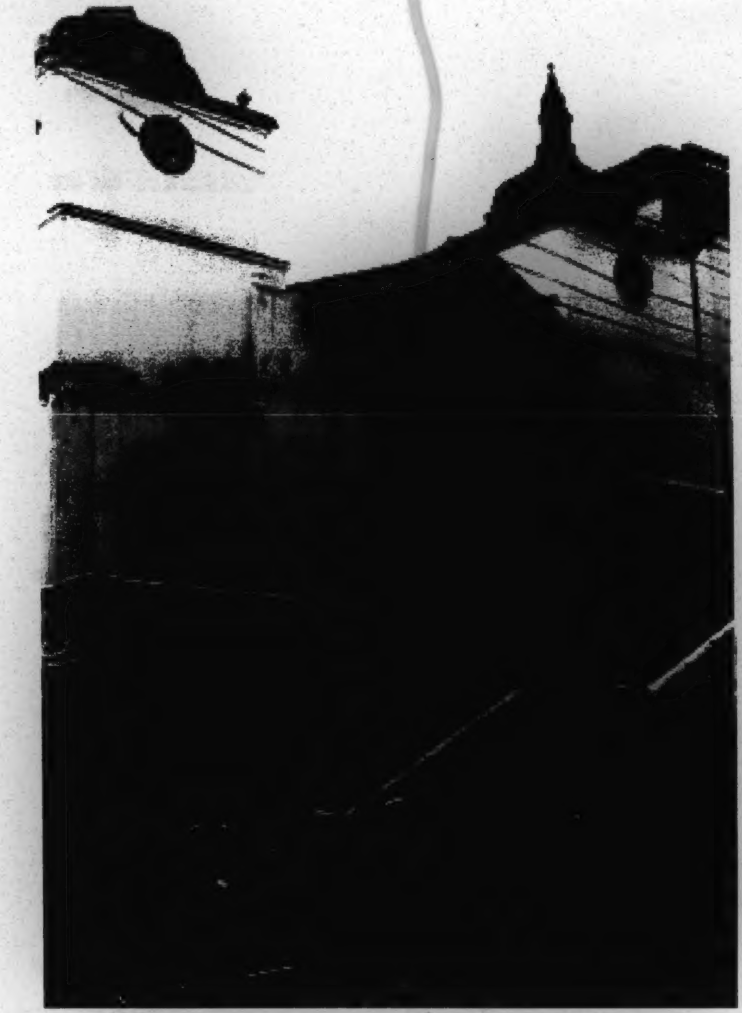

Figure 26: *Sala Dolores*, the refurbished church in downtown Santiago that now serves as a concert venue and rehearsal space for the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente*.

Like *la Banda*, the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente* (*OSO*) is a federally funded organization employing professional musicians. The ensemble features the full complement of string, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. A recent change in directors has had a profound impact on this performing group.

During the pilot study, I interviewed several musicians regarding their involvement with the *OSO*. At that time, many expressed their frustration over the direction of the orchestra. The group was without a conductor, working on occasion with guest conductors.

The previous year, the orchestra's concert series had been suspended for a period of several months and the group performed only one concert the entire season. Several of the musicians moved to Havana to play in orchestras, as there was no rehearsal schedule for the *OSO*. Frustrations were high amongst the orchestra musicians and were aimed specifically at the bureaucrats in *MINCULT* responsible for the administration of the ensemble.

During Phase 1 and Phase 2 of data collection, I was pleased to observe a substantial change in the attitudes of the orchestra players whom I interviewed. Several changes had occurred related to the administration of the ensemble. A permanent conductor had been acquired and a rehearsal and concert season had been re-established. The morale amongst the musicians had greatly improved. A notable improvement in the playing skill of the ensemble was evident.

I had the opportunity to interview the new director of the *OSO* during Phase 2 of data collection. He stated that he was pleased with the improvements in the orchestra. He noted that the group now had a sense of momentum and drive that was not present in previous years. Though he felt that there was still much work to be done, he felt that the group had made significant progress.

The *OSO* is composed of approximately 50 musicians ranging in age from teenagers to senior citizens. The group performs a wide variety of music, including the standard orchestral repertoire and contemporary compositions. Works by Cuban composers, following both WEAM and popular music traditions, are included in their programming. Unlike the National Symphony Orchestra, which tends to restrict its programming to more "serious" selections, the *OSO* regularly programs "lighter" works in its concerts.

Several musicians expressed to me that they feel Cuba's symphony orchestras are currently experiencing difficulties maintaining musicians. Numerous orchestra musicians have left the country, many moving to South America for more lucrative employment and better living conditions. Other musicians have left their orchestra positions for jobs playing at the various resorts in Cuba. Because hotel musicians frequently receive tips, instrumentalists can often earn more money in these locations than they can in their orchestra posts. As a result, several orchestras have had some difficulties maintaining a solid core of musicians.

Pedagogical Practices

Background Information

I observed Pedro teach in two different situations. As a private flute student of Pedro, I observed his pedagogical techniques as related to Cuban-style improvisation for *charanga* music. As an observer of his classes, both with *CES* and *superación* students, I watched him use pedagogical techniques as related to WEAM flute playing.

In my lessons with Pedro, I asked him to focus specifically on Cuban *charanga* music because it is a style that highlights virtuosic, soloistic flute playing. Though *charanga* orchestras have, according to Pedro, become less popular in recent years, there is still interest in this "*música típica*" or "typical Cuban" style of music. Traditional *charanga* orchestra instrumentation consists of flute, violin, viola, cello, string bass, piano, timbales, congas, güiro, and, on occasion, vocals. *Charanga* instrumentation is also used to interpret the various forms of *danzón* music including the *cha-cha-chá*, *bolero*, and related styles.

The flute plays a major role as a melody instrument in *charanga* music. *Charanga* flutists must posses virtuosic technical skills similar to those required of professional flutists performing in the WEAM tradition. As described by one Cuban musician, improvisations by Cuban *charanga* flutists are no less technically demanding than compositions written by Mozart and his contemporaries.

Stylistically, Cuban *charanga* flute players use a more percussive style of articulation than is typically found in WEAM. In addition, Cuban *charanga* music focuses on the upper register of the flute. Because *charanga* music generally does not use amplification, *charanga* flutists predominantly play in the upper register of their instrument in order to be heard above the string and percussion accompaniments.

Unlike in North America, where the flute is rarely seen in popular performing groups, in Cuba the flute is a very visible instrument in contemporary society. The flute is often used in popular groups and can regularly be seen in a variety of performing ensembles. Cuban flutists are regularly featured on television programs promoting Cuban music. Aspiring Cuban flutists can easily look both to the WEAM tradition and the popular music tradition in their own country to find positive role models.

My Private Flute Lessons

Flute lessons with Pedro were a highlight of my research time spent in Cuba. Not only did Pedro provide me with inspirational teaching but he rekindled a desire to achieve ever-higher playing standards. In addition, the conversations that occurred prior to, during, and after my lessons, were invaluable in terms of data collection.

After the initial lesson, held in a practice room at *Sala Dolores*, all of my lessons occurred at my residence in Santiago. Pedro would journey to my house, either on foot or by bus, and we would settle into one to two hours of concentrated flute playing. The time of the lessons varied, dependent on Pedro's rehearsal and teaching schedule. Some lessons occurred in the morning and others in the late afternoon or early evening.

The format of my lessons did not vary substantially from that of our initial meeting. First, I would play a number of *charanga* or *danzón* selections that Pedro had given to me. These were all to be played an octave higher than written. The arrangements were hand-written copies of compositions that he had recorded with a German *charanga* orchestra during an international performing and teaching tour. The selections were all well-known repertoire for a traditional *charanga* orchestra.

After playing several *danzones*, Pedro and I would begin the improvisation portion of the lesson. For this section, which often took over half of the lesson time, we would play duets, one of us playing a repeated bass or *tumbaos* pattern while the other improvised above the chord structure. A gestural cue, such as shaking our heads, or an aural cue, such as both of us playing the *tumbaos* together, indicated that we were to switch roles. Our lessons usually ended with a sight reading portion. For the majority of lessons, this sight reading was a series of jazz flute duets that I had brought with me as a present for Pedro. On occasion, we would alter the order of the lesson, but the content stayed the same for the duration of my studies.

I recorded all of my lessons with Pedro on Mini-Disc for two purposes. First, I made a recording of my lesson for archival reasons in the preparation of this dissertation. Second, I used my recordings to listen to Pedro's improvisations and to gain a better understanding of the *charanga* style.

Prior to beginning our first lesson, Pedro consulted with some of his colleagues as to what pedagogical practices he should use. One colleague recommended that Pedro teach me by having me listen and then play examples. In response, Pedro gave me a tape with 12 *tumbaos*, recorded with rhythm section, for me to practice with at home. In addition, he lent me a copy of the CD that he had recorded with the German *charanga* orchestra which included all of the *danzones* that I was practicing. (Pedro did not own a CD player.)

Within the lessons, very little time was spent explaining how to do things, rather, the majority of time was spent playing. For example, in the improvisation section, Pedro would simply play a one- or two-minute example and then would invite me to do the same. When learning the *tumbaos*, he would teach them to me by rote, he playing them first, with me repeating them until I had secured them in my memory.

At no time did he describe to me the stylistic features of *charanga* style. Understanding the features was for me to deduce through listening. Later in my lessons, when I became more familiar with the style, I outlined to him what I believed were features of *charanga* playing. He would say "yes, that is correct" and offered a few additional descriptions.

As a teacher, Pedro was efficient in his time usage. He had a strong concept of the sound that he was looking for and he had very high standards in terms of rhythmic and stylistic accuracy. He offered minimal positive reinforcement and stressed the importance of patience when learning a new style of playing. He stated that I had "*un poco*" or a bit of technique and that I read the syncopated rhythms better than any of his other foreign students. Throughout the lessons, he constantly kept the beat by tapping his foot, counting out loud, or singing the *clave* pattern.

In offering areas for improvement in the *charanga* selections, Pedro commented on a variety of aspects of my playing. For many compositions, he spent time ensuring that I had the proper "*aire*" or tempo for each. On other occasions, he had me repeat sections so as to incorporate the more percussive style of *charanga* articulation. On yet other occasions, he had me re-do sections to make them more lyrical or singing.

In learning to play this style of music, I found myself most frustrated by the new notes that I had to learn. As a flute player, my range included playing up to high D (D7; middle C=C4) on my instrument. I had never seen notes higher than that written for the flute. Nor had I seen fingering charts containing notes higher than D. Several of the pieces that Pedro had given me required me to play Eb7, E7 and F7. A large amount of my beginning lesson time was spent learning new fingerings for these notes and determining which alternate fingerings were best suited for my flute. I also found it difficult to play notes that were written one octave lower than they were to sound.

Pedro suggested to limit my practicing of these expansions of my range to short amounts of time in order to build up stamina. He also suggested that air speed and embouchure development were the two essential components in playing these notes clearly and concisely. He stated that he only practiced in this upper register when he was performing or recording *charanga* music. Pedro did not practice this extreme upper register on a regular basis.

In our improvisation practice, Pedro offered few comments, we simply exchanged roles. He suggested that I play more rhythmic ideas and reduce the number of notes that I played. The *tumbaos* or repeated sections in *charanga* music are very static in terms of chord changes. Often, the entire improvisation will be done over one or two chords. According to Pedro, improvising over one or two chords is difficult because you do not have much harmonic change to provide interest. Instead, improvisers must create interesting solos by employing rhythmic ideas.

When I asked Pedro if there were any technical aspects to my playing that he suggest I work on, he stated that I could spend some time attending to my vibrato. He suggested that I work on a series of exercises to control both its speed and amplitude. He did not comment on any other technical aspects of my playing but rather questioned me as to why I had not chosen a career as a professional flutist.

Figure 27: A secondary music student seated on the front step of the school of *superación* in downtown Santiago.

Pedro is the more experienced of the two full-time flute teachers at *CES*. During data collection, Pedro was responsible for nine *CES* students and two adult students from the school of *superación*. His two graduating students were to be replaced by two or three new students in the fall, keeping Pedro's teaching load consistent with the full-time expectation of ten students.

As a teacher for over 30 years in the state-run music schools, Pedro feels that he is not the same teacher now that he was several years ago. He believes that today he is a much better pedagogue and that his students are achieving at a higher level than ever before. Pedro states, quite matter-of-factly and without boasting, that he can easily analyze problems in a student's playing. As a result of his years of experience, he is confident that he can remedy any of these problems quickly.

Pedro is also quick to note that he is now more efficient as a teacher than he was in previous years. He is able to bring his students up to a fine playing level in a much shorter amount of time than he did previously. It is Pedro's goal to spend more time learning how he can bring out more of the musical aspects in his students' playing.

Pedro stated that he found 11 students to be too many to teach. He believed that his students encompass a wide age and skill range, each student requiring a unique way of teaching. In order to accommodate the maturity and playing level of each student, Pedro needed to spend a substantial amount of time preparing each student's program of studies and adapting his teaching techniques to best suit each student's learning style.

When asked whether he preferred to teach secondary students or adults, Pedro stated that there were benefits and drawbacks in either situation. In the case of his Special Plan or beginning students, he commented that he liked being their first teacher. In this manner, he could teach them proper techniques from the onset, thereby eliminating the need to correct any ingrained bad habits. He stated that although the Special Plan students were skilled players by the time they graduated from *CES*, many of them were lacking in musical maturity as a result of their accelerated program.

With respect to his *nivel médio* students, Pedro believed that recently there had been a decline in the quality of the playing skills of students auditioning for the school. Students were arriving at *CES* less prepared than in the past. Specifically, he noted that students were lacking in technical skills. Many of the new students had problems with their embouchures and had weak sight reading skills. Some of these problems he attributed to the lack of continuity in flute teachers as well as to administrative concerns at *la EVA*. He also attributed some of these problems to a lack of communication between *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* schools in Santiago.

In commenting on his *superación* students, Pedro stated that, like his Special Plan and *nivel médio* students, he enjoyed teaching them. He found them to be highly motivated and eager to learn. At the same time, ingrained problems, as a result of no or improper training, could sometimes be tedious to solve. Despite feeling that his students were arriving with fewer skills, Pedro, like many of the teachers that I interviewed, believed that the overall playing level of students graduating from *CES* and *superación* was higher than it had been in previous years.

In observing Pedro's pedagogical practices with his students at *CES*, I found him to be extremely efficient in his time usage. He quickly solved any problems that students were encountering. He told his students how to practice sections in order to improve them, and he often sang or played examples to illustrate his points. As found with the majority of Cuban music teachers with whom I came in contact, Pedro constantly tapped or counted the beat for his students.

Pedro's expectations for his students were extremely high. I was impressed with the technical skill of his students, both in the *superación* and *nivel médio* stream. I was most impressed with his fourth-year or graduating students, as they possessed a maturity of sound and musical sensitivity rarely seen in such young players.

Typically, lessons with Pedro followed a set format. First, students would begin by playing their études. He did not require his students to play scales or arpeggios in their lessons, but students were required to practice technique on a regular basis. (Students were required to play scales and arpeggios on their playing exams throughout the year.) After playing their études, students presented their pieces. Because students were approaching their final examinations and graduation recitals during my data collection, many of the lessons included an accompanist.

Throughout lessons, Pedro would comment on a variety of items. With some students, he emphasized rhythmic concerns, with others, stylistic components such as articulation, and with still others, dynamics and tempo. Students repeated sections as necessary. He was brief with his comments, letting students play for most of the lesson.

Pedro, as I found in my lessons, was not quick to offer positive reinforcement, nor was he overly negative. He told students if they had played well; if not, he encouraged them to spend time on sections that required extra attention. The atmosphere in his classroom was one of mutual respect. Students, for the most part, came to their classes well-prepared and listened attentively. In turn, Pedro demonstrated interest in his students by asking them how they were feeling or how they were doing in their other courses.

Pedro freely offered me his philosophy of teaching. For him, experience was a key component. A good teacher, he described, needed to have a lot of experience. He believed that one first learned how to be a good teacher by having gone through the process of learning his/herself. Over time, a good teacher, by being reflective in his/her practice, could develop skills and improve his/her work in the classroom.

Pedro also told me that he believed a good teacher must continually be asking questions. On two occasions, Pedro quoted one of his former teachers regarding this issue. According to his teacher, if another musician did not have any questions, Pedro should not give them any unsolicited answers, for they really did not want to know. Questioning therefore was a sign of a will to learn.

In my observations, Pedro appeared to embody this philosophy. He repeatedly asked me questions regarding flute playing and new repertoire. In turn, he freely answered any questions that I had of him. He asked me for feedback on his teaching techniques and encouraged me to comment on the strengths and weaknesses that I saw in his students. Pedro was in constant contact with his colleagues, repeatedly questioning them about students, pedagogical techniques, etc.

I asked Pedro his thoughts about the national curriculum that he was required to follow. For weeks, I had asked him to bring a copy so that we could discuss it in detail. In my final days of data collection, he confided that he did not follow the curriculum and that he rarely consulted the document. Instead, he constructed his own program of studies for each of his students as he saw fit.

Pedro stated that is was impossible for him to follow the national curriculum. Citing the U.S. blockade and insufficient funding as the predominant reasons, he said that was unable to obtain copies of most of the pieces and many of the études listed on the curriculum. As a result, he had developed his own curriculum for his students.

Pedro said that he was constantly revising his expectations of his students, incorporating new materials as he obtained them. His current program, which he felt was producing higher quality students than ever before, was one that had little to do with the national curriculum but that prepared his students well for entry into the *nivel superior* institutes. (Pedro used materials from the *nivel superior* curriculum to prepare his students such as an étude book by the Bulgarian composer, Todor Kiutchúkof.)

I asked Pedro what he believed were some of the greatest challenges that he encountered in his job at *CES*. He replied that he believed the lack of communication between *la EVA* and *CES* was a major issue. Other teachers that I interviewed echoed similar concerns.

Pedro said that he believed communication between the two schools, both at the administrative and at the teaching level, was lacking. He believed that what was lacking most was a sense of direction from the *nivel básico* administration. Several other instrumental teachers had similar concerns. Pedro thought that regular meetings, both of administration and teaching staff, should be held to promote communication between the two institutions. Within *CES*, Pedro believed that communication between the teachers and administration was excellent, it was the communication link to the *nivel básico* institution that was weak.

Pedro, when further questioned about the challenges of his job, stated that after over 30 years of experience, he was getting tired of the process of teaching. He felt that he was in need of a change. Pedro stated that he had achieved what he wanted to in his teaching career and that it was time to find some new challenges. Towards the end of data collection, Pedro informed me that he was going to audition for a group that performed regularly at a large tourist hotel. A semester playing flute and saxophone, away from his teaching and symphony responsibilities, he hoped would motivate him and bring new depth to his professional career.

CHAPTER 7: ADDITIONAL DATA REPORTING

Figure 28: A percussion student rehearsing for his graduation recital from *CES*. His casual dress indicates that it is a school holiday.

Introduction

This section focuses on factors from three distinct areas that affect the pedagogical and philosophical practices of Cuban music educators. Whereas the degree of influence varies, these factors are not limited to secondary music education. All three have a profound impact on all levels of music education and music performance practices in Cuba.

The section will be divided into three sections. The first section will investigate the effects of a shortage of music supplies upon Cuban music education. The second will look at the influence of parental involvement on Cuban music educators while the third section will focus on high performance standards as related to implementation of the curriculum.

The Shortage of Supplies and its Influence on Secondary Music Education in Cuba

The effect of the shortage of material goods in Cuba can be studied from three perspectives. These are: (a) the shortage of quality, well-working musical instruments; (b) the shortage of miscellaneous supplies such as repair materials, and music stands; and (c) the shortage of print materials. Of these three areas, the shortage of high-quality musical instruments has the greatest effect upon secondary music education. This is especially evident at the *nivel básico* level.

Some music educators place the blame for a shortage of supplies on the U.S. embargo, while others fault Castro's economic policies. All agree that there is a severe lack of material goods as related to music and music education throughout the country. The effort required to adapt to these shortages has had a major affect on the philosophical and pedagogical practices of music educators at all levels. So too has the shortage affected professional musicians throughout the country.

Factors Influencing the Availability of Instruments and Supplies

The shortage of quality musical instruments in Cuba is a recent phenomena dating from the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Prior to this time, it was possible to obtain most material goods related to the field of music. Some Cuban musicians told me of the financially abundant times in the 1970s and 1980s when instruments were available for all music students enrolled in public institutions. If students went on to a professional playing career, a quality instrument was theirs to keep for life. During these decades, some students had more than one instrument available to them.

Although there were instruments available in Cuba during these times, they were not as plentiful nor of as high a quality as would have been found in North America. The 1960 U.S. blockade, banning trade between Cuba and the United States, still prevents the importation of U.S. goods. Because the United States is a major producer of musical instruments, the blockade has severely curtailed trade in these commodities.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the economic base of Cuba was severely disrupted. The result was a loss of billions of dollars in funding to Cuba. Cuban music schools, like all educational institutions in the nation, had their budgets dramatically reduced. Though the Castro government has recently begun to increase funding, many schools are still operating on a fraction of their former budgets. The result is that few new supplies have been bought in the past decade. What supplies schools did possess prior to 1991 have often fallen into disrepair.

Further, there has been a change in official policy with respect to state-supplied instruments for music students. Prior to 1991, all music students received instruments from the government. With the reduction in educational budgets in the 1990s, demand exceeded supply. Schools reacted by encouraging students to buy their own instruments. In some cases, owning an instrument became a deciding factor on whether or not a student would be accepted into music school.

Parents reacted quickly to this change in policy. One parent that I interviewed changed her career path in order to buy her child an instrument to ensure her entrance into music school. Originally an economics teacher at a college, this parent opened a *casa* (bed and breakfast) for tourists so as to increase her income. Other parents I interviewed, rather than change jobs, severely limited their family expenditures. Of these, some sacrificed retirement savings while others reduced their clothing and food purchases.

The financial strain placed on a Cuban family wanting to buy an instrument can be substantial. In North America, a system of rent-to-own is often available to parents of music students allowing them to pay in small monthly installments. If a parent chooses to pay the complete cost of an instrument in one payment, in many situations, a student-model instrument does not cost more than one or two month's salary. The average cost of a flute in Cuba is $250.00 U.S. The average monthly wage of a Cuban worker is $10.00 to $15.00 U.S. The cost of a flute in Canada is comparable to the cost in Cuba. In contrast, an average Canadian salary is over 100 times higher than that found in Cuba.

Buying an instrument in Cuba is not only a financial strain, it is also a complex process. Few instruments enter the country and the result is a very closed market. One of the best means to secure an instrument is to have it brought into the country by a family member or friend living abroad. Parents are therefore apt to maintain ties with expatriates. So too are parents eager to form ties with foreign visitors.

As a foreigner, I came into contact with several musicians wanting me to import items for them. On a few occasions, I was approached by parents inquiring if I could buy an instrument for their child. They also inquired about repair supplies, cleaners, and music. One parent offered to give me money "up front" trusting that I would return with a new instrument.

There is a limited supply of affordable secondhand instruments available for sale within the country. The quality of these instruments is unpredictable and many are old and showing wear. Used instruments, though less desirable in terms of quality, generally cost less than new instruments. To my knowledge, there is no store selling used instruments in Santiago. Used instruments can be located by word-of-mouth via friends or via a phone-in radio program. One parent informed me that she located a flute for her daughter within two hours of placing her call to the radio station.

La EVA has recently altered its policy regarding instruments. Though entrance into the school is based on a series of tests and interviews, parents were beginning to suspect that prospective students who had their own instrument were getting preferential treatment. Parents complained, stating that they found the instrument policy was not consistent with communist ideals. Nor was this policy consistent with the revolutionary principles that guided Cuban society. As of the 2003-2004 academic year, *la EVA* students were not allowed to provide their own instrument.

I learned in the final stages of data collection that a new shipment of state-owned instruments was to be arriving shortly for distribution amongst Santiago music students. This news was regarded favourably by teachers but there was some concern regarding the quality of these Chinese- and Vietnamese-made instruments. (The Cuban government favours trade with communist countries.) I also learned that several foreign non-profit organizations, some of the largest of which are located in Canada, regularly deliver used instruments to Cuban music schools.

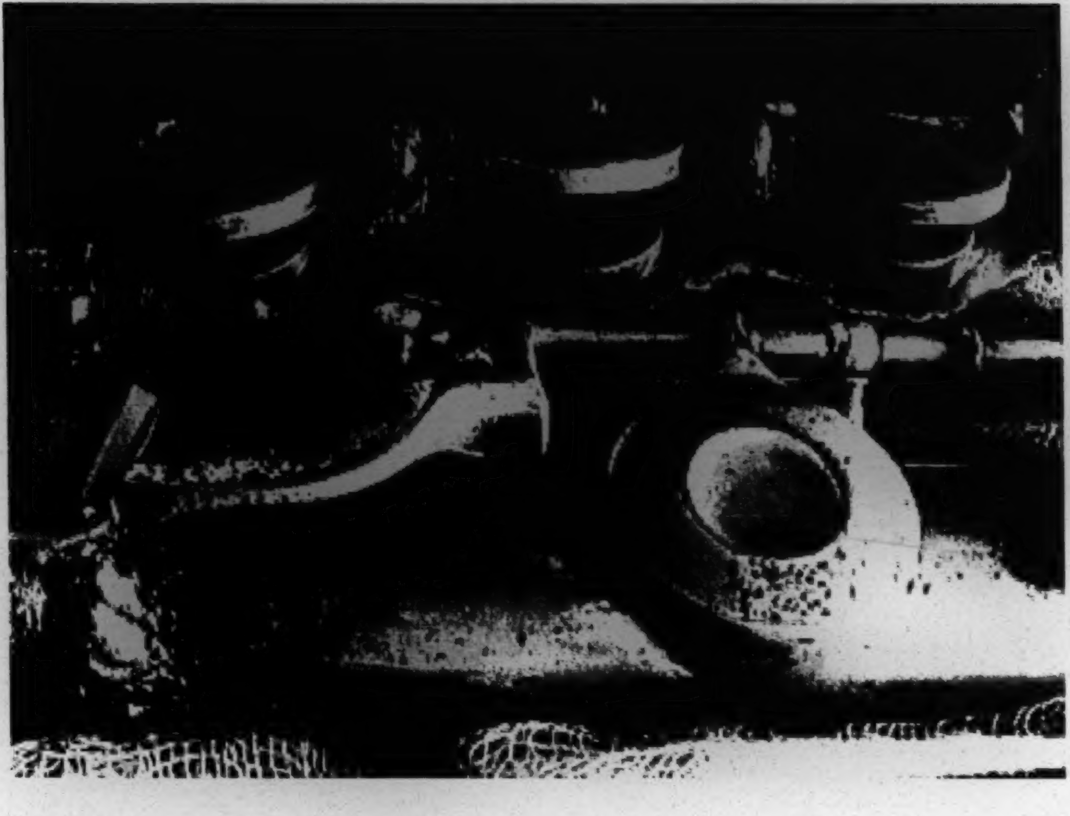

Figure 29: One of the flutes being used by a *la EVA* student. The instrument is severely pitted, the metal finish is badly decayed, the corks need replacing, and the welding of the joints is poorly done.

Throughout data collection, the effects of the shortage of well-working instruments was most evident in the flute *aula* at *la EVA*. Not only did this shortage affect teachers' pedagogical practices, it also affected the daily practice habits of students. For example, Rosa would begin the majority of her lessons by playing and attempting to repair her students' flutes. On some occasions, she was able to fix an instrument; on others, she needed to consult experienced teachers. A substantial amount of instructional time was lost during this process.

On occasions when the repairs could not be completed and students played the broken instruments, students were limited in what they could play in their lessons. For example, one flute student, for the duration of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of data collection, was unable to play the lowest six notes on her flute. She also could not play Bb and was therefore restricted to playing half of her method book.

Of Rosa's 11 flute students, 2 were using flutes that were over 100 years old. One of these instruments, though not visibly abused, was very badly damaged. Humidity and high temperatures had caused the metal to pit forming small holes throughout the instrument. A hard-plastic embouchure plate had been bolted onto the head of the instrument replacing the original metal one. Obvious welds reattached tenons. When I played the instrument, I had great difficulty obtaining any sound, especially in the extreme registers.

Another student needed to send her instrument for costly repairs on a regular basis. The instrument would not stay aligned and needed repeated attention. Repair costs averaged 200 pesos ($7.00 U.S.) per visit. The harsh tropical climate also wreaked havoc on her flute pads, causing them to swell and crack.

The worst scenario that I observed was that of a third-year flute student. When Rosita entered *la EVA* in the fall of 2000, there was no state-owned instrument available for her, nor could her family afford to buy her a flute. Therefore, for the first two years, though she was enrolled as a flute student, Rosita practiced on the recorder. Finally, in Rosita's third year, her church was able to secure an instrument for her. As a result of not having a flute for the first two years of study, Rosita was quite behind in her progress as compared to other students in her grade.

Shortages of instruments in good working condition were not limited to the flute *aula*. I interviewed a bassoon teacher who had been experiencing problems. His concern was that the school owned only three instruments for the four bassoon students. Many of the clarinets and trumpets that I saw were old and in need of major repairs. The most common problems were similar to those found in the flute *aula,* such as worn-out pads, strings, and rusty ligatures. There was also a lack of slide oil, cork grease, and reeds. Many mouthpieces, both for woodwind and brass instruments, were of poor quality and showed wear.

Percussion students were also affected by this shortage. At *la EVA*, all students that I saw practicing were using homemade wooden practice pads. Only during their twice-weekly lessons were students able to rehearse on a *bona fide* snare drum. Drum sticks were of very poor quality and were frequently tattered and missing pieces. As mentioned in previous chapters, all of the schools that I visited had more than one abandoned, unusable piano.

It must be noted that in the city of Santiago, a city of approximately 500,000 I was aware of only one instrument repair person, that being Pedro's youngest son. First trained to repair flutes, Julio was now expanding his business to include saxophones. He hoped to include clarinets in the future. Although Julio had learned some repair techniques from older musicians in the community, he was predominantly self-trained. According to the parents I interviewed, Julio's prices were considered to be high.

Formerly, a free repair service was available from *el ISA*. Students arranged to send their instruments to Havana to have them repaired at the *nivel superio*r institute. I was told that this service was recently discontinued. I was also told that instructional time lost when an instrument was sent to Havana was often inconvenient.

It must be noted that all musicians with whom I came in contact experienced similar difficulties relating to repairs. A great many musicians that I interviewed, like parents wanting to buy an instrument, arranged to obtain their supplies through foreign friends and acquaintances. The most reliable source of supplies for professional musicians appeared to be expatriates.

Instrument Repair

There is not a tradition of instrument repair in Cuba nor is there a program to train instrument repair persons. As explained to me by several Cubans, the very concept of repairing an item, be it a flute, a trumpet, a house, or a building, is not one that permeates Cuban society.

For example, rather than perform regular maintenance on buildings, the state often lets a facility reach the point of demolition. A new building is then built in its place. The time between the condemning of a building and its reconstruction often takes several years due to a lack of building supplies. Such is the case with the *CES* percussion building. (Though it is not reported in the press, an English language student stated that every year, several poorly maintained homes collapsed. In some cases, residents have perished.)

Perhaps in spite of this attitude towards instrument repair, or perhaps because it is both expensive and difficult to have an instrument repaired, secondary music students treated their instruments with a great deal of respect. I repeatedly noted that students were careful to place instruments in a safe storage space. Overall, I was impressed with the care given to student instruments, finding it to be better than what I had seen in Canada.

The Shortage of Print Materials

The shortage of print materials has a history similar to that of the shortage of musical instruments and repair supplies. Since the U.S. blockade and the fall of the Soviet Union, there has been a huge decrease in the amount of printed music available in Cuba. Prior to this, adequate supplies were available to Cuban musicians. The majority of print materials that I saw in the music schools were either Cuban publications or photocopied materials. Some foreign editions were available but they were few in number.

Foreign publications are very expensive and the Cuban government does not import a large amount of music. Throughout my data collection, I heard of only one Havana store that carried a large supply of sheet music. I was informed that *el ISA* sold music but I did not find a Santiago location where I could purchase print materials. Some materials were available in secondhand book stores in Santiago but they were sporadic in number and content. Some Havana stores sold a few printed materials related to music but these were generally history books or choral scores.

In talking with Pedro, the flute teacher, I learned that he acquired the majority of his materials in the form of gifts from foreign friends. Like many other musicians, he bought materials when on tour abroad. To enable more than one student to play a musical selection, he had students photocopy materials or write them out by hand. Other teachers stated that they operated in a similar manner.

Donations

Throughout my data collection as well as after returning to Canada, I discovered that the "gifting" of materials to Cuban musicians and music educators was common. This system is primarily organized on an informal basis. As I wrote this dissertation, I never ceased to be impressed by the generosity of musicians, worldwide, to their Cuban brothers and sisters.

Since my return from Cuba, I have received several telephone calls from Canadian musicians who have visited Cuba and want me to return to Cuba with their donations. At my local jazz club in Canada, an informal donation depot has been established by a musician who plans to return to Cuba. Other musicians have telephoned me prior to their departure for Cuba to ask what type of donations were most needed. Often, these donations are left with musicians performing at the large hotels and tourist locations. This "gifting" of musical supplies as well as the potential for earning tips makes these performing positions both appealing and lucrative for Cuban musicians.

I was informed by my house mother, Carmen, that the state frowns on private donations to schools. Instead, the government prefers that donations be sent to an administrative office (*e.g.*, *MINED*) who will then determine which school is the most in need. I chose to distribute my materials in two manners, none of which directly involved *MINED*.

The first time I visited a school, I gave a variety of supplies to an administrator, generally the Vice-Principal or Principal. In all cases, the administrators assured me that the supplies would be given to the most deserving students. As I became better acquainted with a school, I handed supplies directly to a department head or to an individual teacher. In the case of flute pads, I met with each student to determine what supplies s/he needed. The remainder of the pads, I left with the flute teacher.

I felt that, using this procedure, I could assure that supplies were fairly distributed. If I had not followed such a procedure, I feared that some supplies might have been sold for profit. Because these supplies had been donated specifically for the purpose of being distributed for free, I made every effort to ensure that they were not sold. A large number of supplies, especially drum sticks, went to professional musicians I interviewed.

Effects of Limited Supplies

It must be noted that a lack of supplies, including print materials, had positive and negative effects beyond those that have previously been discussed. The availability of curricular materials certainly had many negative effects on teachers and students. Teachers were constantly limited by the shortage of music and had to make do with those materials that they could obtain, even if it meant altering the curriculum.

Repeatedly, teachers stated that they were prepared to be both patient and hopeful that items would appear. Indeed, patience and faith were two qualities that I found not only in music educators but in the Cuban public as a whole. Cubans appeared to accept that life itself was a challenge but did not appear bitter about this challenge. Rather, in many ways they seemed to accept it and actually celebrate it. Numerous Cubans I met were hopeful that whatever it was in life that they needed eventually would come their way. They were prepared to wait patiently, believing that, at some point in the future, their needs would be fulfilled.

The phrase "*no es facil*" (it's not easy) was a regular part of conversation that I encountered in Cuba. I understood this phrase not to be lacking in hope or negative as in "life is terrible." Rather, I interpreted this phrase to mean "well, you know how it is here -- nothing is ever easy, but such is life." So too was the phrase " *la lucha*" or "the fight" repeatedly used to describe daily life.

Creativity manifested itself in interesting ways as related to music supplies, instruments, and printed music. In the case of printed music, photocopies solved many availability problems, as did hand-copying. As previously outlined, blatant disregard for copyright was rampant. Music stands, rather than being costly factory-made items, were most often homemade wooden versions.

Photocopies were often of poor quality, blurred and unreadable. Hand-written pages often contained errors or were missing sections. Cubans creatively dealt with these concerns by quickly memorizing materials and abandoning the use of the written page. The process of writing out materials, some teachers believed, was beneficial for students as they came to understand and know the materials in greater depth.

Rather than hoarding printed materials, teachers and students would share what little they did have. Only in the case of professional choirs, who wanted to establish a reputation built upon a specific repertoire, did I see a lack of sharing and collegiality. I found this spirit of sharing permeated much of Cuban society. For example, if I complimented someone on an article of clothing, saying that I liked it, she would offer to give it to me.

It was interesting to note that a shortage of supplies and poor quality instruments were rarely used as excuses for bad performance. Never did I hear students or teachers blame an instrument for making them sound badly. Students, though their instruments were difficult to play, were still expected to play with an excellent tone quality. I found that the amount of work required to obtain such a sound on many of their instruments was very difficult. I was repeatedly impressed by the skills that most Cuban music students had developed in spite of the quality of their instruments. I felt the same way about many of the instruments that professional musicians were playing.

Indeed, I played all of the *la EVA* student flutes and had great difficultly obtaining as good a sound as the students. I was surprised at the good sound Pedro obtained on his flute and found it difficult to achieve the same sound on this instrument. When Pedro played my instrument, he simply stated "it is so easy." Standards remained consistently high in terms of sound, in spite of the poor instruments throughout all of Cuba.

I found the lack of attention to musical "gimmicks" or "toys" to be refreshing. For example, most saxophone players that I met had only one mouthpiece and one instrument, unlike many of my Canadian colleagues who prided themselves in owning multiples. Conversations relating to music therefore focused less on material goods and more on quality of sound, "*bomba*" or heart, technical skill, and music analysis.

The lack of metronomes was also dealt with in a very positive manner. Students were continually reminded to tap the beat while playing and to continue playing in tempo if they made a mistake. As I began to adopt this policy into my practicing, I found that my internal rhythm became much stronger. I felt that this occurred because I was physically manifesting the beat by tapping my foot. Beat became not just a mental concept but also a physical one.

In conclusion, though musicians and music students were lacking good instruments, repair supplies, and music, expectation levels in terms of performance skills were not altered. Though the limitations were great, students and teachers seemed to overcome them with patience and skill. In many cases, I felt that the alternative solutions actually strengthened the musical skills of the students.

Figure 30: Young music students and their parents celebrating a national holiday at a music conservatory.

Fidel Castro, since his earliest days in power, has consistently made education a priority in Cuba. From the 1960 Literacy Campaign until the present, he and his government have encouraged Cuban society to believe in the importance of education and the freedom it can bring to its citizens. Castro's achievements have been recognized on the worldwide stage where Cuba is acknowledged as an educational leader amongst developing nations.

Perhaps one of Castro's greatest achievements as related to education has been his ability to engender a sense of civic ownership. Through his educational policies, Castro has created an educational system where the input of citizens is encouraged on an administrative level. For example, community organizations such as the Union of Tobacco Workers or the Militant Mothers' Organization have regular input into policies affecting Cuban education. So too do student organizations have input into the workings of the system. A regular series of open parent forums relating to education has also been established.

Many Cubans I met had been involved in the Literacy Campaign and stated that it had caused an epiphany in their attitude towards education. Others, who had not been involved in the Campaign, were quick to cite both the successes of Cuban education and the importance of learning in their daily lives. Cuban citizens, as a whole, took great pride in the achievements of their educational system. They also embodied their pride by regular involvement in educational activities.

For example, many of the Cubans I met regularly watched the *Universidad Para Todos* (University for Everyone) English language classes on television. These courses are part of an outreach service available nationwide on television sponsored in part by *MINED*. For one hour each day, many Cubans practiced their English pronunciation and grammar as taught by qualified pedagogues. Those who had VCRs often recorded the programs in order to practice at a later time.

Universidad Para Todos does not limit its television productions to language classes. Of note is the History of Cuban Music series which covered the development of Afro-Cuban musical traditions. As with some of their other television series, a comprehensive leaflet, covering the material from the course, was available for purchase. These leaflets were accessible, inexpensive, and sought after by the Cuban public. I saw many of them in the houses that I visited; none of the Cubans I asked were willing to relinquish their copies.

It is no surprise then that education, given its importance in society, should be greatly valued by parents whose children are attending Cuban schools. Indeed, the parental stewardship I observed in Cuba was, I believe, one of the greatest strengths of the system. As a music teacher in Canada for many years, often with my own music parents' association supporting my program, I had never witnessed such involvement as I observed in Cuba. This involvement, though evident at both the *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* levels, was most prevalent at the beginning stages of training.

Unlike Mathematics or Social Studies, where work taken home can often be completed in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, the homework of a music student can affect an entire family. Sometimes schedules need to be established around the availability of a piano, and practice times may need to be co-ordinated so as not to disturb study schedules of siblings. Regardless of the country, when a student chooses to learn a musical instrument, that choice can have a profound effect upon the student's entire family.

I have found in my teaching that I have had more contact with parents whose children were enrolled in music classes than I have had with parents whose children were enrolled in regular matriculation subjects, such as Science or Mathematics. Despite this, I still found that Cuban music parents were more actively supportive of their children than North American parents.

Victoria, mother of Ana, one of the *la EVA* students that I tutored, best displayed this unique Cuban stewardship towards her daughter's music education. Repeatedly she would engage me in conversation as to how she could better help her daughter achieve in her music classes. The time, effort, and sacrifice she made to assist her daughter was inspiring.

For example, Victoria was amongst those parents who changed her career direction in order to have money available to buy her child an instrument. She also explained that the new career direction allowed her to be more active with her daughter's schooling. With a daughter at *la EVA*, she wanted to be able to provide the best support that she could. Her former employment did not allow her to do so.

Victoria's involvement with her daughter's music education was extensive. Some days, she would attend school with Ana, observing her classes and talking with teachers about her progress. On other days, she would come to the school laden with cookies and lemonade for students waiting to complete their performance exams. For the entire afternoon she would wait with other parents as each student finished his/her exam and the final results were announced. Victoria also made every effort to attend all school-related performances, even if they occurred during the regular work day.

Victoria was in regular contact with Ana's flute teacher. She would telephone her to receive feedback on Ana's progress or to keep abreast of upcoming exams and concerts. As required of all parents with children attending *la EVA*, twice-weekly Victoria would sign Ana's notebook that outlined her progress in lessons. When she felt that Ana needed additional assistance, Victoria would locate a tutor for her daughter, a process that placed additional demands on her in terms of time and finances.

In interviewing Victoria, she explained that she often felt inadequate as a parent of a music student. She felt badly that she did not have musical knowledge to assist her daughter when she practiced. She felt sorry for students whose parents were unable to be as actively involved with their children's music education as she was. The personal sacrifice on her part in support of her daughter was very extensive.

Communication between parents and schools in Cuba is fundamentally different than in North America. For example, due to a shortage of paper and limited operating budgets, there is little printed communication sent home to parents in the form of monthly newsletters or information packages. Nor are there posters announcing concerts or newspaper write-ups advertising upcoming school activities. Access to the Internet is restricted in Cuba and e-mail is expensive for most Cuban families. Therefore, parents need to make an effort to keep informed. This lack of print materials throughout all of Cuba also made it very difficult for me to learn about upcoming concerts and community activities.

Unlike some parents with whom I had come in contact in Canada, Cuban parents strongly encouraged their children to become professional musicians. As mentioned in previous chapters, the career of professional musician in Cuba is a very lucrative and prized one. It is therefore understandable that parents would want their children to be involved in such an industry. Competition to be accepted into all levels of music school in Cuba is fierce and places are coveted so it is also understandable that parents would want to become actively involved with their children's music education.

What appears to be somewhat unnatural however is Cuban parents' willingness to have their children involved in a profession that they hoped would allow their children to move abroad. Many Cuban parents told me that they wanted their children to select a career path that would allow them to move to a foreign country. These parents felt that the economic situation in Cuba, despite the efforts of their current government, was not improving. Therefore, in an effort to help provide a better future for their children, they encouraged them to follow careers path that would enable them to work internationally.

Many Cubans are financially dependent upon the generosity of family members who have left the country. Money coming into Cuba in the form of gifts provides a large source of income for the Cuban government. As a result, not only do parents encourage their children to immigrate to a country because they can have a better lifestyle, parents also realize the possible benefits for the entire family. Once one family member secures work in a foreign country, Cuban families will often begin the lengthy process of helping the extended family move abroad.

This desire for parents to help their children grow into a career as a professional musician can be so strong that it can have adverse affects. Milagros, the Vice-Principal of *la EVA*, discussed this in some depth during our interview. She said that sometimes it was the parent, not the child, who wanted to have a musician in the family. Therefore, teachers needed to help students determine if this was a suitable career path for the student. I observed teachers having conversations with students related to this issue on several occasions. In this light, one can easily understand how the policy at *CES* prohibiting parents from attending entrance auditions and exams came into being.

According to Victoria, there is a fine line to walk between being an advocate for a child in music school and being identified as a "troublesome" or "pushy" parent. Whereas Victoria felt that she needed to be a support, she did not want to become known as a bothersome parent. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the pressure on teachers and administrators to attend to parents' needs and requests was great.

Throughout my data collection, I found that parents provided positive support for their children in music school. Most parents were also very supportive of the administration and teachers of these facilities. Active parents appeared to understand the pressures on music teachers while still being sensitive to the needs of their children. So too did active parents appear to understand the importance of sharing responsibilities with the music teachers in terms of practice supervision and arranging for extra help. Teachers and administrators stated that they appreciated the assistance of parents in easing their work responsibilities.

Effects of High Performance Standards as Related to Implementation of the Curriculum

Introduction

A common thread was woven through all my interviews in Cuba relating to the achievements of the Cuban music education system. In every conversation I had with teachers, administrators, musicians, students, parents, and the general public, each person unequivocally stated that s/he believed Cuban music students were graduating with higher skill levels each year. There was no disagreement on this topic. Cubans believed the underlying reason behind such growth and achievement was that the level of teaching had significantly improved over recent decades. What I believe additionally contributed to this success was a nationwide emphasis by musicians and the public on high performance standards.

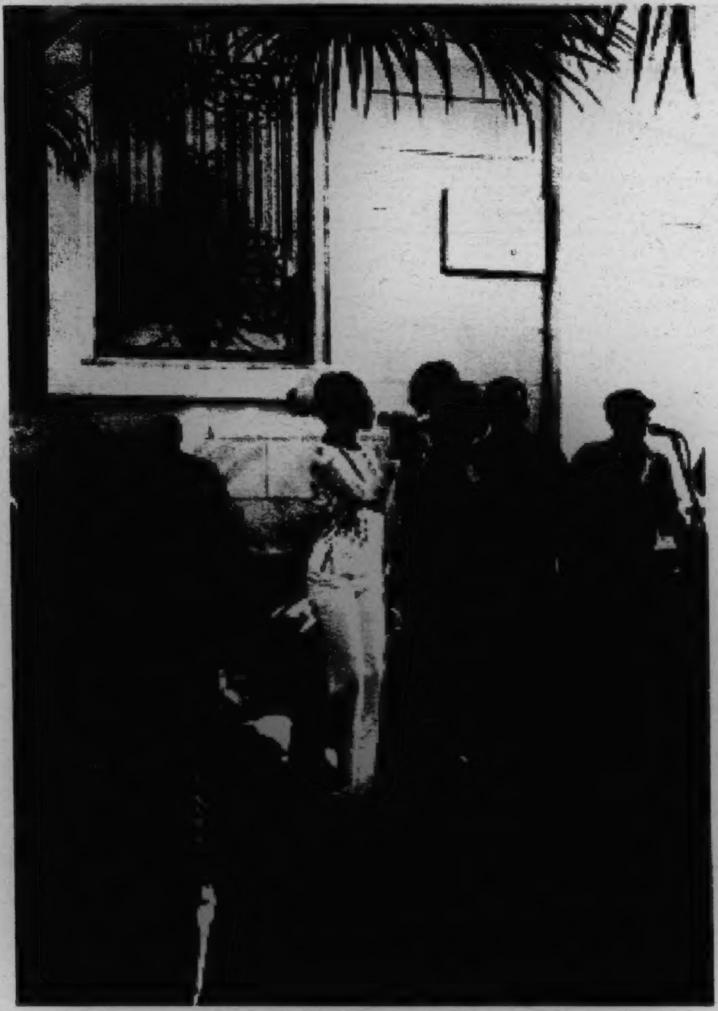

Figure 31: A *peña* at the *Casa de África* in Santiago.

In the social psyche of a Cuban, every person is a dancer, every person is a singer, and every person is an artist. Participation in the arts, on a community level, is not something that is restricted to a select group of "talented" or "educated" musicians; rather, all citizens are considered to be part of a continuum of those involved in the arts.

In Cuba, there are those who are professionally involved in the arts, whom Cubans respect greatly for their skills, but the average person on the street, the tobacco worker, the mother at home, are all artists in their own way.

If a Cuban hears music that he likes, he will spontaneously begin dancing, be it in a store, a public park, a friend's home, or while walking down the street. If a Cuban hears music that she likes to sing to, she will often join in enthusiastically, even if she is seated on a bus or other form of public transportation. It is the right and privilege of every Cuban to be active with the arts. No one is silenced for singing loudly, no one is told to stop dancing because a venue is inappropriate.

The spontaneous involvement in music and dance is what gives Cuba much of its vitality and fame. For example, when waiting for a restaurant meal, sometimes the music is turned up, the tables cleared, and a "fiesta" begins. Strangers dance with strangers in order to pass the time before their meal is served. When a salesperson knocks at the door of a home, if he likes the music that is playing, he will pause in his work day for a dance. So too will students pass the time between classes learning new salsa steps.

Because every citizen is a participant in the arts, all have criteria for defining good art. I found that the public had very high musical standards and were very discerning. They had a preference for music that was "*bailable*" or "good to dance to," and demanded that musicians be highly talented and able to play technically advanced music.

The importance of a performance being a "show" or entertainment was also evident. For example, I happened upon a rehearsal of a salsa band when I was walking down the street with a non-musician friend. We stopped to watch the rehearsal, as did many others, as the door was open in the rehearsal space. While some observers started dancing, my friend began commenting on the skill of the group. He said that they sounded good, in fact excellent, but that he would not stay and watch them if they were in a dance club because they did not have a well-rehearsed and impressive stage presence.

Stage presence is very important for all Cuban musicians. This is not limited to popular music only but also to the field of more serious music or WEAM. For example, the Cuban choirs I heard had their music memorized in order to have better eye-contact with their audience. Various instrumental quartets I observed also memorized their programs and literally danced their way through performances. The "stiffness" of WEAM was not as evident as in North America. Even the symphony orchestra welcomed a conga line into their performance, their audience dancing while exiting.

I found that Cubans were very apt to show their dislike of a group by leaving the performance, sometimes in the middle of a composition. I observed this not only in informal situations such as a nightclub or bar, but also in more formal settings such as a symphony orchestra concert. If a group was not performing at a suitable level, the audience would quickly "boo" or talk loudly amongst themselves to show their disinterest. With such socially acceptable behaviours, Cuban musicians had to strive hard to please their audience, for if not, there was no audience left.

Cuban musicians do not have the advantage of an advertising industry to help them become well-known. Nor do Cuban musicians have producers with large budgets who are willing to promote them to the public. The promotional materials of the North American popular music industry are minimized in Cuba. In order for a group to become popular, they must do so not through print advertising and professional promotion packages but rather through performance and word-of-mouth recommendations. As a result, I believe that it is the quality music and not the image that truly sells Cuban music to Cubans.

The appeal of foreign travel has also influenced the performance skills of Cuban musicians. As mentioned in previous chapters, travel outside of Cuba is highly restricted for most Cubans. Musicians, however, are internationally promoted by the Cuban government and possibilities for travel are greater than for the general public. Cuban musicians can gain both valuable experience and financial stability by touring abroad, so the appeal to travel is great. Competition to be accepted to tour is also great. The by-product of this competition is that performance standards are raised.

It must be noted that many Cuban musicians believe that the best or most talented Cuban groups are not necessarily approved to tour abroad. The musical style currently popular in the global marketplace usually determines which performing ensembles will be given permission to travel. As noted in previous chapters, the tourist audience coming to Cuba, similar to the audiences in their home countries, tends to prefer a simpler style of Cuban music, one with less rhythmic complexity. This said, the quality of Cuban touring groups is still extremely high in terms of performance standards. A group that has not already gained the approval of the discerning Cuban audience is not likely to gain permission to travel internationally.

How does this musically discerning public influence music students in the Cuban education system? Because Cuban music students are primarily educated for involvement in the music industry on a professional level, they are greatly affected by the performance expectations of their fellow musicians, their community, and the international audience. Because the public is discerning and demands that their musicians be technically skilled, professionals must work hard in order to gain popularity.

Because the job of musician is a favourable one, in terms of financial possibilities, the competition to be employed is stiff. Cuban music students must meet the expectations of their public in order to be gainfully employed or to travel internationally. Surrounded by increasingly skilled musicians, the students aspire to achieve more. With a public and economic situation that continually pressures musicians to raise their performance standards, overall skill levels are consequently raised.

Performance Expectations and Curricular Standards

Figure 32: A young music student pausing for some conversation between classes.

Many of the Cuban music teachers and administrators I interviewed believed that the skill levels of music students had risen because the skill levels of music teachers had risen. In one interview, an administrator stated that, because many of the teachers in the music schools are graduates of the music education system as established since the 1959

Revolution, they are better trained as musicians and better able to improve upon the existing system. Several teachers I interviewed echoed this sentiment.

As outlined in previous chapters on *la EVA* and *CES*, there were certainly pedagogical differences observed in the Cuban flute *aula* compared to what I had observed in its North American equivalent. I observed several of these practices being used in numerous other classroom settings. The effect of these pedagogical practices upon the skill levels of Cuban musicians was notable.

First, the manner in which students are started on an instrument in Cuba is comprehensive and demanding. In the early part of their training, a high degree of emphasis is placed upon posture, breathing, and tone quality. At the *nivel básico* level, the importance of establishing these habits is paramount. Unless students demonstrate these skills, they are not allowed to move forwards; nor are they allowed to perform in public.

A personal example can best illustrate this point. I took conga lessons from one of the percussion teachers at *CES*. For the first four lessons (eight hours) I was restricted to working only on learning the four basic *toques* or strokes in order to develop proper technique and tone quality. At no point was I taught a simple rhythm or repeated pattern to employ these strokes; my learning was limited to basic technique only.

I found myself frustrated and bored with such a limited pedagogical practice. The process appeared very pedantic and the teacher did not attempt to make the process interesting or entertaining. Finally, once the teacher felt confident that I had mastered these very simple techniques, I was gradually introduced to simple patterns and rhythms. By North American standards, I found even this introduction to be very slow and controlled.

My percussion teacher was not the only Cuban pedagogue to teach in such a manner. I found that the flute teachers, even with their advanced students, continued to be very vigilant of posture, breathing, and tone quality. Of these, the most important was attention to proper breathing or *respiración*. Throughout rehearsal for graduate recitals, I repeatedly heard *CES* teachers telling their students to pay attention to their breathing.

Once the fundamentals of playing an instrument are established, Cuban students are placed on a program that has high expectations in terms of technique. From an early stage, students are required to expand their range to the full possibilities of the instrument. In the case of wind and brass players, students are pushed to develop their embouchures quickly in order to play to the extremes of their registers. The high-playing trumpeter definitely is not a rarity in Cuba; neither is the high-playing flutist or clarinetist. As compared to their North American counterparts, students can play the full range of their instruments at an earlier stage in Cuba. They are further encouraged by Cuban popular music that tends to emphasize extreme instrumental ranges.

Cuban students also develop technical prowess at an earlier stage than their North American counterparts. Though both students and teachers stated that they did not like this emphasis on technique, their skills were clearly impressive. I was very taken by the technical prowess of all music students, especially at the *nivel médio* level. The difficulty level of music the students played was impressive as was their technical command of this music.

Specifically, Cuban music students are required to play a variety of technical exercises over the entire range of their instruments. Technical requirements include not only major and minor scales but also arpeggios, dominant seventh chords, and scales in thirds, fourths, etc. Chromatic scales and modes of the major scale were also studied intensively. I observed some upper-level students playing études that emphasized augmented chords, whole tone scales, and jazz-style altered chord extensions. Students were required to perform this technique with a variety of dynamics, styles, and articulations. So too were these technical exercises to be played with attention to proper *respiración.*

Students who were capable of playing technical exercises beyond the curricular requirements of their programs were put on more difficult programs requiring additional skills. For example, one *la EVA* saxophone student I observed was working on études and technique that were at least two years ahead of those being played by his colleagues. Such gifted students were also playing musical selections that were well beyond the capabilities of their fellow students.

Perhaps one of the most notable pedagogical practices I observed was repeated attention to using *solféo* or sight singing skills in individual music lessons. Many of the teachers I interviewed believed that strong *solféo* skills were at the root of strong musical skills. Repeatedly they would tell students to work on their *solféo* exercises or to sing through one of their pieces using *solféo* syllables. Students who were weak players were encouraged not only to practice their instruments but also their *solféo* exercises. A respect for those who were skilled in *solféo* was noted by many teachers.

I found the requirements of the *solféo* classes to be impressive in Cuba. I observed a Grade 9 *solfé*o exam and found the requirements to be similar to those of a second year university aural skills course in North America. Despite this, I found the *solféo* skills of many students, for example students at *la EVA*, not to be that strong. What I did find, however, was that students, because Cuba uses the fixed system of *solféo*, had a very strong sense of relative pitch. Many students could easily identify a pitch or key of a song quite readily and were surprised that I had some difficulty doing so.

As mentioned in previous chapters, though I found that Cuban music students were not necessarily strong at sight reading rhythms, they certainly had a different sensibility towards rhythm. The repeated tapping of their teacher, in substitution for a metronome, helped them to develop a strong sense of internal rhythm. Their attention to a consistent beat, even in technical exercises and études, was notable.

In conclusion, though I cannot state that I found them to be highly innovative, the pedagogical practices of Cuban music educators were different from standard North American practice. What I found to be the most interesting was the emphasis that Cuban pedagogues placed upon specific skills such as technique, posture, sound quality, *solféo*, and *respiración*. In response to a highly discerning public, Cuban music educators set standards for their students that demanded high performance skills in all areas.

CHAPTER 8: RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND INSIGHTS

The primary focus of this study was to investigate the relationship between culture, curriculum, and pedagogy in secondary music education in Cuba. This final chapter presents the results of the ethnography along with discussion and insights for Canadian music educators. The chapter is divided into the nine research questions as outlined in Chapter 1. Insights, implications for Canadian educators, and discussion are included in the ninth or final question. The chapter concludes with a listing of areas for further research.

Introduction

The system of formal music education as taught in state-sponsored schools in Cuba is divided into two streams. The first stream consists of the General Stream which is available to all students from pre-school through Grade 7. The goal of this stream is to provide students with the opportunity to be involved in musical activities. Pre-school music is taught in day-care style facilities by music specialists. Elementary music is taught by general classroom teachers who have received pedagogical training in music during three of their five years of teacher education. Music literacy is not considered to be an important skill for General Stream students of music.

Pedagogical practices, considered by teachers to be "uniquely Cuban" in nature, borrow extensively from Eastern Bloc traditions and well-known approaches such as Orff and Kodaly. Activities consist primarily of singing, music games, and movement. Some elementary instrumental activities, such as rhythm band, are also included. Repertoire studied includes a significant amount of Cuban traditional music as well as music from Spanish-speaking and Eastern Bloc nations. A limited amount of WEAM is also included.

In Grade 7, students study Music Appreciation, a course that focuses both on WEAM and Cuban music. Teachers of the Grade 7 Music Appreciation course are trained at the Pedagogical Institute. Many schools utilize the national radio broadcast of this course due to a severe teacher shortage. A nationally developed curriculum outlines the course content for all levels of general music education from pre-school through Grade 7. After Grade 7, General Stream students do not receive any additional courses in music through the school system. Students wishing to be involved in musical activities may do so by means of community and extra-curricular involvement. As found in the state-sponsored school system, these activities are free of charge and are available to all children.

The second stream of music education in Cuba is the Specialized Stream. Specialized Stream music education in Cuba is divided into three levels: (a) *nivel básico* (Short Stream [seven years of study beginning in Grade 3] and Long Stream [five years of study beginning in Grade 5]), (b) *nivel médio* (four or five years of study [Special Plan] beginning in Grade 10), and (c) *nivel superior* (five years of university level study). Classes for these two lower streams are offered in all provinces in Cuba at Fine Arts schools and Conservatories. There are two *nivel superior* institutions, one in Havana, the other in Camagüey.

The goal of the Specialized Stream of music education in Cuba is to prepare students to become music professionals capable both of performing and teaching music. The process involves a nationally developed sequential curriculum that allows for teacher input and student acceleration. Classes, along with all required materials, are available free of charge to any student identified as a potential music professional. Teachers in the system are generally graduates of the *nivel médio* or *nivel superior* music schools. Some have additional training from the Pedagogical Institute.

The Specialized Stream serves as the primary area of focus for this study and results presented herein will deal specifically with this stream. Results from both the *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* will be presented. The terms "secondary music education" and "Specialized Stream" will be used interchangeably to indicate that the two levels have been combined.

Results are presented using the questions that served to focus the research. Though each question encompasses a specific topic, there is a substantial amount of interplay between the various responses presented. Therefore, some results will be presented in more than one section but will be framed according to the specific research question that has been outlined.

Question One

What is the philosophy of pedagogy of teachers and administrators involved in music education in Cuba?

The pedagogical practices of teachers and administrators must be embedded within the ideological beliefs of the existing system of education. Any discussion of the philosophy of pedagogy must therefore reflect an understanding of the existing ideological beliefs surrounding the organization of a particular educational system. Education in Cuba, as in any country, is the product of the political and cultural history from which it has evolved.

The very process of defining the term ideology, let alone determining what it encompasses and how it is manifested in a society, can be lengthy. As Pratte (1977) notes, depending upon the philosophical glasses with which one views it, ideology can be extremely varied in its character and embodiment. For the purposes of this document, I have adopted the following definition of ideology:

> an integrated pattern of ideas, systems of beliefs, or a "group consciousness" which characterizes a social group. . . may include doctrines, ideals, slogans, symbols, and directions for social and political actions.
>
> (Bernier & Williams, 1973, p. 27)

As Pratte (1977) states, while some ideological concepts are ever-changing, others remain stable over an extended period of time. He additionally outlines that while some ideological concepts are universally accepted, others are openly challenged and rebuked. Therefore, the ideological beliefs affecting the philosophy of pedagogy presented herein may or may not be universally accepted by Cubans. So too may some of these concepts be in a state of flux. All of the concepts presented however, do appear currently to affect the philosophical and pedagogical practices of Cuban secondary music educators.

Cuban music teachers, if they are cognizant or not of the ideological norms ruling their society, adapt their pedagogical practices to fulfill societal expectations. Along with an education system that has grown out of a Communist agenda, albeit one that is uniquely Cuban, secondary music education in Cuba follows a set of ideological principles that are plainly different from those influencing secondary music education in North America.

Cuban Specialized Stream or secondary music education is based upon the principle that potential professional musicians should be identified at an early stage and channeled into professional training facilities. Cuban students identified for this career are therefore streamed into Fine Arts schools/Conservatories beginning in either Grade 3 or Grade 5 (depending upon their instrument choice) and receive extensive musical training (8-14 hours per week) for a duration of nine years. Entrance auditions into the schools are detailed and rigorous. Availability is limited and becomes increasingly so at the higher levels.

The system of pedagogy is also based upon the ideological principle that students are best taught a variety of music-related subjects, on a regular basis, for an extended amount of time. A system has therefore been developed where students are required to take a variety of twice-weekly music courses for the duration of their schooling. These courses include music history, music theory, individual instrumental instruction, individual piano instruction, participation in ensembles, and *solféo* (including rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic study). The above courses are compulsory at all grades both at the *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* levels.

In direct contrast to the General Stream, the Specialized Stream is based upon the principle that music literacy skills are one of the most important building blocks in forming professional musicians. This is one of the most notable aspects of the Cuban music education system. Students in the Specialized Stream therefore receive rigorous, twice-weekly lessons in *solféo* in all grades both at the *nivel básico* and *nivel médio* level. Individual instrumental teachers also require their students to use *solféo* both during and while preparing for their lessons.

In addition to an emphasis on *solféo,* there is an ideological emphasis on the development of technique in young instrumentalists. This emphasis is built directly into the curriculum. For example, students are expected to play all major and minor scales (with their arpeggios and broken dominant-seventh chords) over the entire range of their instrument by the end of their third year of study. Early attention is also paid to proper breathing, posture, and tone quality. Expectations on students, in terms of performance standards, are extremely high throughout the duration of their studies.

The principle of flexibility is also evident in the ideological principles supporting the Specialized Stream of music education in Cuba. The curriculum allows for flexibility and this concept permeates the pedagogical practices that teachers employ. For example, if a student is progressing at a rate faster than that of his/her classmates, a teacher is encouraged to have him/her move forwards onto more difficult materials. Teachers are also apt to be flexible with the curriculum due to the unavailability of required materials.

The prevailing ideology also emphasizes the use of WEAM and Cuban classical music in the development of music professionals. By and large, teachers are supportive of this principle in their pedagogical practices. Teachers and administrators interviewed believe that, combined with extensive technical studies, these are the most suitable genres of music with which to prepare professional musicians. Many teachers believe that experience with Cuban popular music is also important and are beginning to include this genre in their teaching.

An ideological emphasis on the oral/aural tradition over the written tradition is also found in this stream of Cuban music education. Repeatedly I found teachers and administrators placing an emphasis upon non-notational based instruction as well as memorization. Students are encouraged to learn repertoire by ear or to quickly memorize written materials. In addition, teachers often have students tap their toes or move in rhythm to the music during their lessons showing an emphasis on corporal expression.

Perhaps one of the most notable characteristics of the Specialized Stream of music education is that, through both its curriculum and organization structure, the delineation between music educator and music performer is removed. Philosophically, in Cuba, there is to be no difference between a teacher and a performer. Anyone trained as a professional musician should be capable of executing both of these roles with equal proficiency.

The curriculum is therefore organized in such a manner that when students graduate from the *nivel médio* level, they are considered music professionals capable both of teaching and performing. Due to an agreement between the schools and the professional ensembles, teachers can easily be involved in professional performing groups while maintaining a full teaching load. Teachers interviewed cited this as a major motivating factor in their professional development.

The predominate ideological belief among teachers and administrators is that experience is the best indicator of excellence in a teacher. More simply stated, the better teachers are considered to be those with more teaching experience and not necessarily those with more pedagogical training. This does create some concern with beginning teachers; however, a system of professional development has been established. There is no mentoring system available for new teachers involved in Specialized Stream music education in Cuba.

Ideologically, teachers and administrators believe that their pedagogical practices are "Cuban" in nature. A great sense of national pride perhaps fuels this belief. Throughout data collection however, no distinct Cuban pedagogical practices were determined. In fact, pedagogical practices tended to be rather conservative or traditional in their approach. What is unique about Cuban pedagogical practices is the emphasis placed on specific areas of study (*e.g.*, *solféo*), and methodologies (*e.g.*, rote learning) as opposed to the use of any distinctly Cuban pedagogical techniques.

Question Two

Figure 33: A man accompanied by his grandson and some drums as found sitting on their doorstep in Baracoa (eastern Cuba).

How does culture influence the development of a philosophy of pedagogy in Cuba?

Throughout the course of the study, it became evident that Cuban society is very supportive of the arts and, most especially, of music. Cuban identity, on an international level, is intimately linked to music and it is often music that serves as the impetus to draw many visitors to the island. The Cuban government is well-aware of the international appeal of its musical traditions. These musical traditions, combined with federal policies, make Cuba unique in its support of the arts.

Cuban society is a culture where citizens acknowledge and support the sacrifice needed in order to achieve musical excellence. Citizens prize the profession of musician and value participation in musical activities by all members of the culture. Both contemporary Cuban and "classical" or "Western European" culture are valued by Cuban citizens. Members of the general public have discerning taste and well developed skills related to music.

Music is seen as an integral part of the national identity and as a source of national pride. Music is not treated as a "frill" or "non-essential" subject but as an integral component in the personal development of every citizen. Government policies ensure that music education and cultural activities are made available to all citizens at a minimal cost

Cuban society is a culture with a community support of, and involvement in, movement and dance as an aspect of daily life. Cubans believe that every person is an artist, a musician, a dancer. True freedom to a Cuban, is defined as the ability to express one's own unique Cuban culture, be it through art, poetry, music, or dance.

Cuban society is also a culture where involvement in education, music, and music education is greatly valued. The Cuban education system is supportive of the musical development of teachers (*e.g.*, an organizational structure that allows teachers to participate in professional performing ensembles, educational activities, and extended international tours). The system also allows for students of any race, gender, or socio-economic background to become professional musicians.

Cuban society is a culture with a job market that provides ample employment opportunities for musicians after graduation. Cuban media (radio, television, and print) extensively supports quality music that is uniquely Cuban in nature. The popular music tradition features a wide variety of woodwind, string, brass, and percussion instruments providing excellent role models for young musicians.

With such cultural influences, music teachers, students, and professional musicians feel supported by their communities. Musicians' work is valued. Teachers are held in high esteem. Music students are envied. To be a professional musician or a music teacher is to be part of a select group of individuals who are contributing to the very fabric of the nation and Cubans greatly value these efforts. As a result, music education, by means of positive social factors, maintains high standards despite severe economic factors that greatly influence both curriculum development and implementation.

Question Three

How is curriculum implemented and what factors influence its implementation?

The curriculum for training professional musicians in Cuba has been somewhat static in nature. Originally written just shortly after "the triumph of the Revolution," there have been very few formal alterations to the curriculum since that time. The process of implementing reform to the curriculum is slow as proposed changes must be approved by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education.

The Specialized Stream music curriculum is organized in a sequential manner. All materials must be mastered before a student can progress to the next level. Students undergo a series of rigorous examinations three times per year in order to demonstrate mastery.

Prior to an examination period, individual instrumental teachers must submit a list of materials outlining what each student has covered in his/her classes since the previous reporting period. Materials played in an exam cannot be repeated at another examination. A passing mark is set at 85%.

At the end of each level of study (*nivel básico* or *nivel médio*), students undergo a *pase de nivel* or final examination. Juries for these examinations are composed of teachers from the subsequent level. If a student passes the exam and if there is an instrumental teacher available, the student is accepted into the next level.

For all instrumental study, the curriculum is implemented by individual teachers in private studios. Numerous factors ensure that what is occurring in private lessons is consistent with the curriculum. For example, staff meetings are held to discuss the progress of students. As a result, all department members are well-versed in the academic and musical achievement of all pupils. Students requiring assistance are identified and then observed by the Department Head.

The lack of adequate sound insulation between *aulas* enables teachers and Department Heads to keep abreast of student achievement, not only in their own area but throughout the school. Further, examinations are attended by all teachers from a department. For example, all woodwind teachers must attend all woodwind examinations.

At examinations, teachers are notified if their students are achieving the required standards. Teachers are also informally evaluated by department members. During an examination period, Department Heads sometimes gave verbal feedback to teachers regarding their pedagogical techniques and suggested areas for improvement.

Teachers are encouraged to be flexible as they implement the curriculum. Students who are achieving at a higher level than their colleagues can be given more difficult materials. Students who are not achieving at an acceptable standard must complete all requirements before moving onto more challenging material. In this manner, teachers can alter the speed at which they implement the curriculum and can tailor programs for individual students.

At the *nivel médio* level, there is a great amount of difficultly in securing the required supplies and materials listed in the curriculum. For example, repertoire selections are extremely hard to obtain. Those copies that are available are generally in poor condition. As a result, teachers frequently substitute required repertoire selections with pieces that they feel are of a suitable level.

Pedro, the senior flute instructor at *CES,* stated that he found it impossible to follow the required curriculum due to a shortage of supplies. Over the years, he had developed his own curriculum using his own materials. Like many other teachers, Pedro frequently relied on the donations of foreigners to acquire new repertoire. Pedro believed that the repertoire that he chose for his students was often more difficult than that required by the curriculum.

Difficulties in obtaining musical supplies affected curriculum implementation in other situations. For instance, beginner instrumentalists were often seen playing instruments that were in need of major repairs. The limited ranges of these broken instruments prevented some students from playing the required materials. Other students were behind in their studies because there were no instruments available for them. (The state supplies instruments to students). In the case of percussion students, frequently the only available snare drum was owned by the teacher, schools would not own any snare drums.

The lack of available supplies, though it did result in a great deal of inconvenience, clearly demonstrated the creativity of the Cuban people. Students could be seen practicing percussion on small boards and pieces of carpet. Flute players would learn the recorder while waiting for a flute. In all situations, whereas it was evident that the lack of available materials seriously affected both students and teachers alike, it was notable that the expectations of student achievement were not lowered.

One issue that seriously affected implementation of the curriculum was related to the lack of continuity in teachers. At the *nivel básico* level, teacher turnover was high in many areas. For example, in the flute *aula,* students had three different teachers in three years. In addition, students were behind in their progress because they had to travel twice-weekly to another school in order to receive instruction. The poor public transportation in Cuba resulted in many missed lessons.

Communication problems also affected curriculum implementation. Communication with parents was frequently an issue due to a lack of paper and printing supplies. Within some schools, lessons were missed when door keys were not available due to a lack of departmental communication. Teachers also commented that communication between schools was a concern.

Despite a criticism of the communication between schools, teachers appeared very supportive of each other at all levels of secondary music education in Cuba. Teacher enthusiasm, camaraderie, and dedication were all high. Teachers had consistently high standards for their students at all levels of instruction. The dedication on behalf of teachers significantly influenced the implementation of the curriculum. Extra hours of instruction given freely by enthusiastic music teachers was a characteristic found throughout the secondary music education system in Cuba.

Question Four

What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of music education at the secondary level?

Throughout my field studies, as I became better acquainted with the workings and organizational structure of the Cuban system of music education, I gained a greater appreciation for its achievements. Repeatedly I was impressed by the musical skill levels of Cuban music students, music teachers, and the general public. I was also impressed by the high standards of musicality expected of both amateur and professional musicians. Cubans place great importance upon participation in the arts and they value good-quality artistic expression.

The strength of the existing system of music education in Cuba stems from an intricate balance between the organization of the curriculum, pedagogical practices, and cultural expectations. From my observations, I found the following to be the strengths of formal music education in Cuba:

1. music specialists involved in compulsory music education for pre-school children.
2. a nationally developed sequential curriculum, that allows for teacher input and student acceleration, with the goal of graduating students capable of teaching and performing at a very high standard.
3. experienced,well-qualified teachers active as professional musicians in the fields of classical and popular music.
4. emphasis on oral/aural traditions (*e.g.*, non-notational based instruction, early memorization of music).
5. emphasis on rhythmic development by means of corporal expression.
6. training in *solféo* at all levels of instruction.

7. twice-weekly lessons in a wide range of music-related subjects (*e.g.*, music history, piano, music theory, etc.).
8. teaching and performing practica for advanced students.
9. emphasis on technical skills, sound production, tone quality, posture, and breathing.
10. emphasis on the development of high concentration skills.
11. little hierarchical distinction between student and teacher; performer and educator.
12. emphasis on communication, camaraderie, creativity, and perseverance.
13. extensive governmental and community support.
14. a culture that is supportive of music and music education.

No system can be without its flaws; however, the strengths of Cuban secondary music education appear to far outweigh its weaknesses. During data collection, some participants believed that the predominant weaknesses of the existing system were a direct result of the U.S. blockade (*e.g.*, shortages of quality goods and supplies related to music education). I found this justification to be too narrow in its thinking and have come to the conclusion that the following are the predominant weaknesses of the system of formal music education in Cuba:

1. lack of continuity of teachers in a specific post or school.
2. lack of a formal mentor system for novice music teachers.
3. lack of good communication between schools.
4. lack of well maintained facilities (*e.g.*, poor lighting).
5. lack of goods and supplies related to music.

Question Five

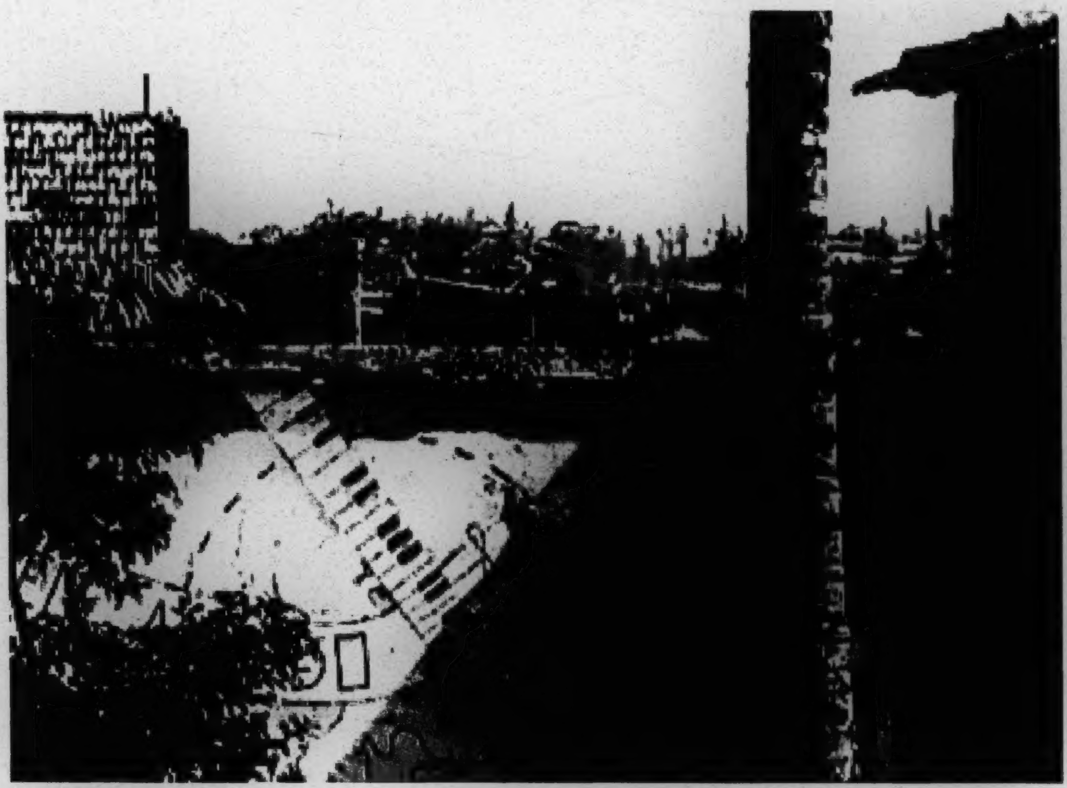

Figure 34: The music mural painted on the back wall of the *CES* property in downtown Santiago.

What are the current challenges facing the existing system of music education?

The Cuban music education system is not without its challenges. Despite this, I was impressed by the perseverance, creativity, and dedication of all music professionals with whom I came in contact in Cuba. Throughout data collection, the following issues appeared to be the most demanding upon music educators and the system of secondary music education in Cuba:

1. a loss of professional musicians/teachers to countries offering more lucrative employment and improved living conditions.
2. a loss of professional musicians/teachers to the tourism industry.
3. a severe shortage of teachers for specific instruments (*e.g.*, bassoon, oboe).
4. a severe shortage of supplies and training for instrument repair.
5. a severe shortage of operating budgets for schools.
6. a severe shortage of supplies and materials related to music education.
7. a severe shortage of high-quality, functioning musical instruments.

Question Six

How do students, parents, teachers, and administrators view the current system of music education in Cuba?

Before presenting the results of this question, a brief explanation of the Cuban attitude towards critiquing public institutions should be outlined. As found in data collection, Cuban parents, teachers, and administrators were somewhat hesitant to analyze and suggest improvements to any state-run institution. The delineation between critiquing an institution and being considered "against the Revolution" is a very complicated issue. Often, criticism can result in serious negative ramifications and a loss of priviledges for a Cuban national.

For example, if a Cuban would like to make a statement about the federal government in a public forum, a written copy of that statement must first be sent to a government official. If the official believes that the statement is "in support of the Revolutionary cause," it may be presented publicly. However, if the official believes that the statement overtly criticizes the government, the writer may be classified as a "counter-revolutionary." Being classified as a counter-revolutionary may result in a loss of priviledges such as refusal for travel permits or job promotions. In extreme cases, the result may be a prison term.

Therefore, it was no surprise that when participants were asked to state their viewpoint about the existing system of music education, the responses tended to be of a positive nature. Nonetheless, despite this hesitancy to criticize public institutions, I found that students, parents, teachers, and administrators alike were overwhelmingly pleased with their existing system.

Repeatedly, when asked how they felt about the quality of secondary music education programs, all participants believed that higher performance standards were being achieved each year. For example, teachers interviewed stated that their students were playing at increasingly higher skill levels. As compared to when the teachers themselves were in music school, the technical prowess and musicianship skills of contemporary music students was far superior. Administrators also agreed with this statement.

Parents and students involved in secondary music education also agreed with this statement. Though there were individual criticisms regarding a lack of communication, funding, and materials, parents and their children believed that the system was continually improving. Students felt that they were receiving an excellent education. Parents believed that their children were being well prepared for their chosen careers as professional musicians.

The reasons behind why participants believed the system was consistently improving were varied. Some participants believed the underlying reasons were economic. Because jobs as musicians are considered to be some of the most prized, participants believed that the level of competition had increased significantly. Because the level of competition had increased, so too had performance standards and, reciprocally, teaching standards.

Other participants, mainly teachers and administrators, believed that the system had improved due to better teacher training. According to several participants, the majority of music teachers working in the Cuban music schools are graduates of the existing system as established by the Castro government. Teachers are now teaching second generation students in a manner similar to how they had been taught. This understanding of the existing system, its strengths and weaknesses, enables teachers to significantly improve their pedagogical practices and, in turn, the skill levels of their students.

On the rare occasions when participants did share their criticisms of the existing system of music education, similar concerns were expressed by parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Many commented that communication was an area requiring attention; so too were the economic realities of living in a developing country such as Cuba considered to be an important issue.

Many participants felt that too much emphasis was placed on technique, especially in the early years of study. Students and teachers were most likely to express this concern. One administrator felt that the *solféo* skills of her institution needed improvement. Overall, however, parents, students, teachers, and administrators involved with secondary music education in Cuba were intensely proud of the achievements of their system. Specifically, they were proud of the ever-increasing skills of students graduating from Cuban Fine Arts schools and Conservatories and of the graduates' contributions to the cultural fiber of Cuba and abroad.

Question Seven

What influence do the factors of gender and race have upon students and teachers involved in music education at the secondary level in Cuba?

Prior to the Revolution in 1959, women and people of colour were among the most marginalized sectors of the Cuban population in terms of musical training and general education. With the introduction of state-funded music schools and the expansion of general Cuban education, the doors to these once wealthy, white male-dominated institutions were opened to all members of society. People of colour and women flocked to state-run schools to become literate. So too did they flock to the music education system that now legalized equal access to professional music training.

In casting a glance over the contemporary music school and professional musician population in Cuba, there appears to be no overt discrimination towards these two groups. What were originally all-male orchestras and bands now contain both men and women. What were once music schools only for white Iberians now enroll students and teachers from every racial group represented in the Cuban population.

Gender Issues

Since the Cuban Revolution, federal policies have favoured substantial changes in the role of women in the workplace. As result, there has been a significant increase in the number of women attending post-secondary institutions. Additionaly, women have been encouraged to train for jobs that were traditionally considered to be male-oriented. There has also been a marked increase in the number of women involved as administrators or "*jefas*" throughout the work environment in Cuba.

Paralleling this increased and varied role of Cuban women in the workplace has been an increase and variation in the role of women in secondary music education. Since the Revolution, there has been a substantial increase in the number of women receiving training as professional musicians. Further, women are now encouraged to play instruments that were traditionally considered to be male-oriented. Women have also shown a marked increase in their roles as administrators in the various institutions involved in secondary music education.

An increase in the role of women in secondary music education can be seen both in the teaching and student populations. Prior to the Revolution, formal music was predominantly taught by men. Students were predominantly male. In contemporary Cuba, both of these populations contain an equal number of men and women.

A variation in the role of women in secondary music education can be seen in the choice of instruments studied by males and females. For example, though the trumpet was traditionally viewed as a masculine instrument, Cuban women are now able to study this instrument. Women are also selecting to play two other traditionally male-oriented instruments -- the double bass and percussion. Societal changes and the encouragement of teachers has enabled female students to move into these traditionally male-dominated areas.

It is interesting to note that in some instances there has been a complete shift in the gender orientation of an instrument. Some instruments that once were once male-dominated are now female-dominated. For example, 30 years ago, the flute was considered to be a male-dominated instrument. In contemporary Cuba, more females than males are electing to play this instrument.

The increase in the involvement of women the area of administration can also be seen in the Cuban system of secondary education. For example, all of the schools involved in the study were administered by a female Principal. This does not imply that males were not involved in administration. Many of the Vice-Principals and Department Heads who participated in the study were male; however, there did appear to be a large percentage of females involved in upper levels of administration at Cuban music schools.

Throughout data collection, additional issues relating to music education and gender were found. The most glaring example was in *la Banda*. Unlike the symphony orchestra, the *OSO*, which had almost equal male and female representation, only two of the over 40 members of *la Banda* were female. Ironically, Rosa, one of the female members of *la Banda*, stated that she especially enjoyed this ensemble. *La Banda* had few evening commitments thereby allowing her more time with her young family.

This tendency towards a male-dominated professional concert band was not found in the capital city, Havana. There was an substantially larger number of women involved in the Havana equivalent of *La Banda* than found in the Santiago group. *La Banda* may have retained its male dominance as a result of its military band roots and its provincial location.

A full understanding of the depth and complexity of gender issues related to music education was not within the scope of the study. Though insight into this area was discussed in participant interviews; the issues related to gender and secondary music education in Cuba require additional research.

Racial Issues

The predominant racial groups found in Cuban society are of African and Iberian roots. A very small population with Asian roots is also found in some areas. Over the centuries, the delineation between these races has been blurred. Today, few if any Cuban families can be described as being pure descendants of any one racial group as so many interracial marriages have occurred. As a result, the issue of race in Cuba has become blurred.

Indeed, there are Cuban families that are of a lighter complexion. So too are there Cuban families that are of a darker complexion. However, with the blended families commonly found in Cuban society, members of any given family may posses the entire range of skin tones -- from very dark to very light.

This said, despite the efforts of the Castro government to eradicate racism, there still exists deeply rooted racism against those with a darker skin tone. This racism is not overtly expressed in public venues or at cultural activities. Neither is is overtly expressed in the press or other media. Instead, the racism exposes itself in casual conversation or in daily activities.

For example, in Cuba, some still believe that the best boxers and baseball players are the dark-skinned Afro-Cubans. Others believe that it is the dark-skinned Afro-Cubans who make the best drummers. Some members of the population believe that the darker the skin, the less one should be trusted in monetary situations.

Dark-skinned Afro-Cubans sometimes have difficulty entering events at fine hotels. Some participants believed that those with darker skin tones are more likely than those with lighter skin tones to have their identification randomly checked by police officers. Even tourists with a darker skin tone have experienced some difficulties when trying to enter select restaurants and clubs.

Within the Cuban music education system however, there does not appear to be any overt racism towards the dark-skinned Afro-Cuban population. In no instance during data collection did I hear of or witness any negative attitudes towards this group. All ranges of skin tone were well represented in symphony orchestras, concert bands, choirs, salsa bands, and cabaret shows. So too were these ranges well represented in both the student and teacher populations at all levels of music education in Cuba.

There are musical activities in Cuba that are more regularly attended by distinct segments of the population. For example, *rumba* began as a Afro-Cuban dance form on the streets of major urban centres. To this day, *rumba* remains a Afro-Cuban dominated art form. At some street festivals in Santiago, being of a lighter skin tone, I was one of a noticeable minority. My participation was not discouraged and I was warmly accepted in these settings. As found both in the Cuban music education system and in various cultural activities in the community, formal music and music education revealed no significant racist tendencies.

A full understanding of the depth and complexity of racial issues related to music education was not within the scope of the study. Though insight into this area was discussed in participant interviews; the issues related to race and secondary music education in Cuba require additional research.

Question Eight

What influence do economic and political factors have upon the existing system of music education at the secondary level in Cuba?

The results of this research question will be presented in two sections. The first section will deal with the economic factors influencing the existing system of secondary music education in Cuba. The second section will discuss the ideological principles and political factors of contemporary Cuban society and their influence upon music education.

Economic Factors

Perhaps the most overt effect of economic factors on the Cuban system of secondary music education can be seen in the lack of supplies and materials made available to students and teachers. Goods that are considered an essential part of educational supplies in continental North America are considered luxuries in Cuban music schools.

For example, at no time did I see a metronome in a Cuban music school. Slide grease, valve oil, ligatures, replacements pads for woodwinds, and drumsticks are extremely difficult to obtain. Those who criticize the Castro government blame this lack of supplies on the U.S. embargo. Others blame this shortage of goods on Cuba's continuing status as a developing nation.

Figure 35: Street sellers vending food items in the city of Santa Clara.

Cuban Communism, with its concept of economic equality, is being forced to adapt to an increasingly globalized, capitalist world economy. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the world has paid close attention to how the Castro regime adapts to this increased globalization in the marketplace. In 1991, Castro legalized the possession of American dollars by Cuban citizens. Since that time, a dual economy (pesos and dollars) has evolved. Today, many Cubans define their political system as being a "directed democracy" or a new form of Communism that allows for a controlled "free market" and regulated "private ownership." Cubans are now allowed to rent out rooms in their houses or *casas* to tourists. They may also sell their agricultural products at non-state-sponsored markets. Recently, the government has allowed citizens to own businesses such as private taxi services and restaurants.

According to many Cubans, with the current trends in globalization, financial security can no longer be assured solely by means of involvement in state-run institutions and the peso economy. Financial security can only be assured through the accumulation of American dollars. Cubans can obtain American dollars in a variety of ways. In addition to the means described above, a legal method of obtaining dollars is participation in the tourism industry, an industry where workers can easily procure tips in American dollars. One of the most lucrative means of obtaining American dollars is to have them sent to Cuba by family members living abroad.

On the illegal or black market side, Cubans can quite easily obtain dollars from foreign tourists searching for companionship while vacationing on the island. Involvement selling government-regulated items (*e.g.*, cigars, shellfish, beef) or hard-to-obtain items is another excellent source of income. Though the Cuban government states that prostitution has officially been eradicated in Cuba, many men and women earn dollars through this type of illegal employment.

The quest for American dollars has significantly altered the music industry and secondary music education in Cuba. Symphony orchestra members are leaving their posts in state-run ensembles, preferring to perform with ensembles with contracts at major tourist locations. Many music teachers now take on foreign tourists as students in order to earn American dollars. Music teachers now include popular music in their curriculum, knowing that many of their students will be destined for careers that cater to foreign tourists. Some educators, after their regular teaching day, are active as musicians in tourist locations where they can earn American dollars through tips or CD sales.

The Tourism Industry

In order to diversify its economy after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Castro government began to aggressively develop tourism. Throughout the 1990s, expansion of the tourism industry was seen as the number one priority for economic development. Today, tourism is one of the most important industries in Cuba, second only to the nation's traditional source of income -- sugar.

Cuba has been criticized for discriminatory practices relating to the tourism industry. Complaints of segregation of tourists from the Cuban population have been raised, as has the limited access of the Cuban public to tourist locations such as beaches and resorts. In addition, numerous goods such as beef and shellfish have been designated for tourist consumption only, and possession of such goods by Cubans is punishable by a sizable fine.

Despite segregation, the tourism industry has had a profound effect upon Cuban society. Through contact with foreign tourists, Cuban citizens have been able to lessen some of the feelings of isolation that prevail in their society. In addition, Cubans have been able to learn about other cultures and develop a greater sense of understanding of the global community.

However, some Cubans believe that the tourism industry has "corrupted" their society. For example, some Cubans believe that their society has become more materialistic since the rise of the tourism industry. Others believe that the moral fiber of

Cuban youth has been affected. In Santiago de Cuba, it is common to see 16 to 18 year old girls dating and marrying 50 to 60 year old foreign men.

Jobs in the tourism industry, especially jobs for musicians, are considered to be among the best available in Cuba. Only citizens with exemplary education and work records are accepted into this sector. Not only is competition fierce in terms of musical skills, musicians must also demonstrate devotion to the Revolution in order to be considered for employment in these highly sought-after positions.

Ideological Principles and Political Factors

Apple (2001) identifies the following ideological principles as having a significant impact upon contemporary education in the United States: (a) the rise of neo-liberalism, (b) the religious right movement, (c) the marketing of education, (d) the loss of autonomy of teachers, and (e) increased accountability of teachers and students (nationalized testing). Canada, because of its ideological and geographical proximity to the United States, shares many of these ideological influences. The predominant ideological influences observed to have the most significant affect upon education, and more specifically secondary music education, in Cuba are the Revolution, isolation and restrictions, the musician as *trabajador* (worker) and the Cuban media.

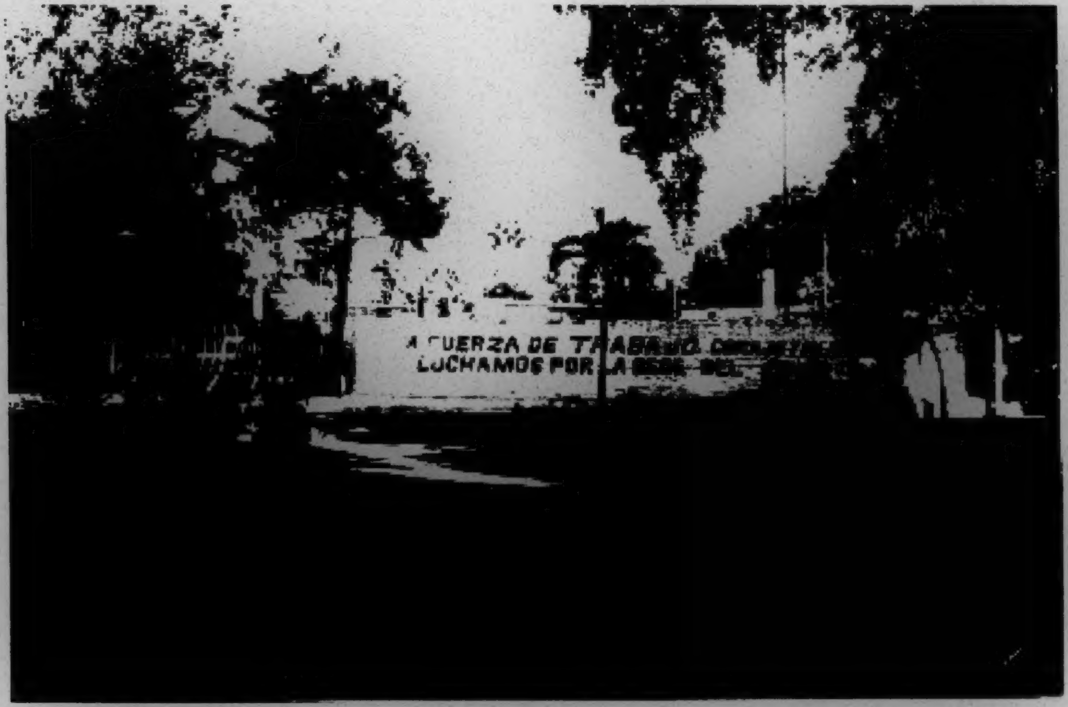

Figure 36: A pro-revolutionary slogan found in the Vista Alegre district of Santiago.

The Cuban Revolution officially began on January 1, 1959. Cubans are socialized, primarily via the media and state-sponsored organizations, to believe that the Revolution is ongoing. For example, newspapers bear names such as *Juventud Rebelde* (Rebellious Youth) or *Trabajadores* (The Workers). Similarly, social organizations bear names such as the Militant Mothers' Organization. Pro-revolutionary phrases cover public spaces such as roadside turnouts, retaining walls, and hillsides. Slogans such as *venceremos* (we shall overcome), *la Revolución hasta siempre* (Revolution forever), or *luchamos por la sede del 26* (we shall fight for the seat of government of the July 26 movement) remind Cubans that they must always be ready to fight for the Revolutionary cause.

Anything that is counter to the Revolutionary principles of Cuba cannot be tolerated, as the Revolution is the very essence of Cuba. Daily Cuban life is considered to be a battle, *la lucha*, a constant revolution against forces that could obstruct the rights and freedoms of the Cuban people. All are to be ready to fight for freedom and to be vigilant of their rights as free Cuban people.

As a result of this community consciousness of "always ready to fight for the cause," a great sense of national pride is maintained. In secondary music education, this national pride translates to pride in Cuban music, musicians, and Cuban musical heritage. This pride is also manifested by the requirement that all music students play one Cuban selection in each of their performance exams for the duration of their music education. (In discussion with Cuban music educators, many were shocked to hear that in both Canada and the United States students are not required to perform music of their home country in all of their playing exams.) This national pride is also manifested by Cubans giving great legitimacy to Afro-Cuban/popular music.

Isolation and Restrictions

As a Communist island nation, separated from the global marketplace of capitalism, Cuba is isolated not only physically but also ideologically from much of the developed world. Severe restrictions on foreign travel amplify the concept of isolation. In addition, major restrictions placed on access to print materials, the Internet, recordings, computers, and other forms of communication fuels this feeling of isolation. While North America is experiencing an information overload, Cuban citizens are struggling to gain access to materials and information. The search to attain that which is restricted is part of Cuba's communal psyche.

In secondary music education, this isolation is evident. Teachers continually search not only for print materials but also for good quality instruments and repair supplies. Musicians compete for lucrative positions at tourist resorts in order to gain access to foreign friends, money, and material goods. Competition to receive authorization to tour internationally is fierce.

From an opposing perspective, this isolation from the global marketplace may be the reason why Cuban culture has become, and continues to be, strong. Cuban musicians, with limited infiltration from other cultures, have brought Cuban music to great heights. State support of salaried musicians has allowed Cuban artists the freedom to develop their skills. In secondary music education, the lack of print materials, musical instruments, and good quality supplies has resulted in a resilient and creative teaching force with a student body that is increasingly more skilled each year.

The Musician as Trabajador (Worker)

A Cuban musician is considered to be a worker equal to any other worker employed by the state. Special treatment, other than the ability to travel internationally so as to promote Cuban music, is minimal. World-renowned Cuban musicians are still considered to be regular community members with no more rights than those of their neighbours. This said, renowned musicians from Cuba can make great financial gains through international recording and touring contracts.

As a result of the principle that Cuban musicians are but another type of state employee, musicians are not subject to the high degree of "star" treatment prevalent in capitalist countries. Famous musicians can still be easily approached after a performance by any audience member. Cuban musicians do not need body guards, nor do they need to be separated from fans for security reasons. Most Cuban musicians can walk down a street in Cuba relatively unbothered.

Every family appears to have a professional musician in its ranks. Families are proud of their professional musicians but in Cuba everyone is considered to be a musician to some degree. Therefore, a musician is not considered to be a "unique" or "different" person in Cuban society; rather, s/he is considered to be a part of the "regular" Cuban population.

This principle that Cuban musicians are workers for the community, and in turn for the Revolution, is manifested in secondary music education. Music teachers, no matter their international status, are always approachable. Students are taught that they are no different from any other member of society. A sense of communal sharing is prevalent and a strong musical community is felt throughout the country.

The Cuban Media

The role of the Cuban media is to glorify the state and its achievements. Criticism of state institutions must be pre-approved by state authorities and may only be expressed in state-approved forums, which generally do not include media coverage. The media therefore displays primarily positive achievements of the Revolution and goes to extremes to keep the successes of the Revolution in the consciousness of the public. Cubans are subject to daily reminders of their national heroes, battles, and international achievements.

Through the media, Cubans are kept well informed of international politics, especially as related to negative press regarding the United States. In general however, Cuban adults are concerned with international politics and are current in their knowledge of international relations.

Unfortunately, because of the government's restriction of any news items that are deemed to be "not in support of the Revolution," Cubans are often unaware of events occurring in their own country. On many occasions, I received information from North American friends about events that had occurred in Cuba that were never reported in the Cuban press. These events were generally of a negative or criminal character, such as rapes, murders, and kidnappings. As many Cuban citizens explained, the tendency of the national press to minimize such events causes the Cuban people to be unsure and untrusting of their government.

At the positive end of the spectrum, the Cuban media is extremely supportive of Cuban musicians. (Watching television with a Cuban friend in her 30s, I was surprised that she did not recognize the Rolling Stones. Neither did she recognize the name of the group or any songs.) Up-and-coming professionals receive prime air time and nationally aired radio programs regularly feature amateur musicians. Cubans are kept abreast of cultural activities, as many are televised within days of their performance.

The influence of outside sources on Cuban television and radio is restricted in support of Cuban artists and their development. As a result of this media support, Cuban musicians graduating from secondary schools can receive a significant amount of media attention. Musicians can become well-recognized and respected in their communities in a relatively short time due to this assistance.

Question Nine

What insights can this study offer for Canadian music education?

Boardman Meske (1990), in her call for reform of North American music education, noted that researchers must look at radical paradigm shifts in order to effect change in the existing system. Cuba, in my mind, offers such a radical shift. The concern however is that, because the North American and Cuban music education systems are so opposing in their structures, it is difficult to find simple, effective methods of implementing Cuban practices into the existing system in North America.

This section consists of two subsections outlining possible implications of the study for Canadian music educators. The first is a personal testimony as to how I have changed my pedagogical methods as a result of my research. The second looks at future directions/questions for educators based upon the results of the ethnography.

A Personal Testimony

What I have found useful in attempting to help Canadian music educators adapt Cuban pedagogical practices into their teaching is a personal investigation of how I have altered my pedagogical practices as a result of my extended field studies in the Cuban music schools. Since returning from my fieldwork in Cuba, I have been involved in a variety of teaching situations. I have been actively employed as a flute clinician and guest conductor, primarily for junior high and high school music students within my community. In addition, I have worked as a substitute teacher in local junior high/high school music programs. I have taught secondary music methods courses at the university level and been active as a choral conductor for an adult community choir.

As I work in these settings, I have noted that I am altering how I teach as a direct result of my observations and interviews with Cuban music educators. I foresee that I will continue to make changes to my pedagogical practices through a deeper understanding of my fieldwork. In all situations, I feel confident that the changes I have made to my pedagogical practices have made me a more effective teacher. I have made significant changes to my teaching as related to movement and non-notational based instruction.

Figure 37: Dancers at a *peña* at the *Casa de África* in Santiago.

Movement

Dance is an important part of daily life in Cuba. For example, at baseball games, drum groups located throughout the stands encourage the crowd to move. At the conclusion of the event, drummers often lead fans into the streets for a conga line, lacing throughout neighborhoods until the early hours of the morning. During Carnival season, Cubans parade through city streets, dancing to the sound of the *corneta china* (chinese cornet) and *tambores* (drums). Outside of Carnival season, if Cubans hear drums or *música bailable*, they will often stop what they are doing and begin to move to the rhythms, be they at work or at a formal function. Expression through dance is a commonplace activity in Cuban culture. As a result of my immersion into this dance culture, I have incorporated more movement into my pedagogical practices. This incorporation of movement has manifested itself in two manners: tapping my foot to the beat and dancing.

In North America, movement has traditionally been involved in music education at the elementary school level. The elementary music approaches of Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze all make extensive use of movement as they teach young children the principles of music. Unfortunately, once students reach the junior high and high school level, the use of movement in teaching music is severely diminished.

At the secondary school level, not only are Canadian music students less apt to be involved in musical activities incorporating movement, but many students are instructed to stand or sit still while singing or playing instruments. Often, the movement-filled music class of their elementary years is replaced by a regimented and sedentary music experience in their adolescent years. For example, throughout my youth, I was repeatedly told not to tap my foot while playing music. The only time that I was encouraged to do so was by a jazz teacher; other music teachers wanted no overt display of the beat. Neither was I encouraged to move to the music.

In Cuba, never did I observe a teacher telling a student to reduce his movements or not tap his feet while playing. In fact, the opposite was true. Cuban music educators wanted to see their students move. Cuban teachers wanted their students to tap their feet. Through my observation of Cuban music educators, I became convinced that this manifestation of the beat, in a physical form, provided an additional means to internalize beat. The kinesthetic expression of the beat, through foot tapping, can therefore serve as an important learning tool for developing internal rhythm and a constant tempo. Like many Cuban music teachers, I now tap my foot to keep a steady beat. Both in my personal study and in my teaching, I incorporate this into my practice.

The second manner in which I incorporate movement into my teaching is through dancing. Since my return from Cuba, I find myself more apt to encourage my students to dance or move while playing music. Additionally, I find myself dancing more while on the podium. When rehearsing a jazz or pop song, I frequently dance during rehearsal to maintain a more energized rapport.

I find that a kinesthetic expression of the beat, through dancing, significantly aids in developing a strong, steady sense of internal rhythm. For example, when playing scales, études, and technical exercises, not only do I encourage students to tap their feet, I also encourage them to step from side to side or dance. When students are playing a solo piece, I encourage them to do the same.

In addition, I encourage my students to allow others to dance while they are practicing. A personal example best demonstrates this point. When taking drum lessons from one of the percussion teachers at *CES*, I would often go to his house to practice.

His mother, a lover of dance and movement, would frequently come into the room while I was rehearsing. Immediately, she would begin to move to my drum beats. As a musician, her movements inspired me to play better; as a dancer, she quickly informed me of slight tempo alterations or irregularities in my playing. The exchange was a very beneficial one.

In our society, so obsessed by body image and weight, our comfort and ease with movement has been lost, especially at the adolescent level. In comparison to my Canadian students, Cuban youths appeared comfortable with their bodies. I had observed many Canadian students who slouched or appeared to be uncomfortable when asked to do movement. Cuban youth were the opposite. They were ready to move at any time, the majority had excellent posture, and they appeared "comfortable in their skin."

Though it is not within the scope of this study to include an in-depth discussion about the benefits of movement, the results of this study clearly indicate that the incorporation of dance into our daily lives in Canada, especially for our youth, could be very beneficial. Continuing on with the excellent work being done at the elementary level, incorporating movement into our music education programs, be it only foot tapping or foot movement, could greatly benefit Canadian secondary music students. I am not advocating that band classes become dance classes, nor am I encouraging teachers to have choir rehearsal in the gym. Rather I am stating that some degree of movement should be incorporated into music classes, be it through warm ups, toe tapping, or a physical expression of the music.

Figure 38: A music student learning a rhythm and moving to the beat in the courtyard at *CES*.

The roots of North American music education are well secured in oral/aural learning or non-notational based instruction (Birge, 1937). The first examples of formal music instruction in the United States involved music teachers who traveled from town to town, teaching hymns by oral/aural means to the various faith communities. Over time, these early music teachers expressed the need for church members to become musically literate. The "rote versus reading" battle began. In contemporary North American society, formal music education appears to have shifted away from these origins. From my experience, for the most part teaching music by oral/aural means at the secondary school level is either frowned upon or deemed out of fashion.

It is not only in the area of music that a reliance on the written page is found. North America has become a society based on literacy, where many oral/aural traditions have been lost. In contrast, Cubans, in keeping with their African heritage, still use non-notational based learning and rely on oral/aural traditions in many aspects of their society. A severe paper shortage and limited access to technology has also kept oral/aural traditions valued in Cuban society.

Throughout my experiences in Canada as a music teacher, I have found that students are quite polarized in terms of their oral/aural and reading skills of music. I have seen many students who possessed excellent sight reading skills but were unable to play even a simple melody by ear. I have also observed the opposite: an instrumental student who had great difficulty reading a simple written melody but who could learn a complete musical theater score by ear in one evening. Rarely have I encountered students who possessed strengths in both areas; nor did I encounter many students with skills in one area who were willing to develop their skills in the other.

I feel this is, in part, due to our teaching practice in North America. As a profession, we place so much emphasis upon music literacy that we relegate oral/aural or listening skills to a place of lesser importance. Students need to be exposed to the importance and the benefit of possessing both skills. For example, when I was learning

Spanish, not only did I learn to read but I also learned to write and speak the language. I also immersed myself in the Spanish language, copying the speech patterns of others. The acquisition of music skills should involve a similar process.

Green (2001) encourages music teachers to use the pedagogical practices of popular musicians in their formal teaching situations. Green recommends employing techniques such as learning repertoire by ear into the contemporary music classrooms. Music literacy is an important skill, however, in our diligence to teach students to read music, we appear to have forgotten about the positive affects of non-notational based methods of learning.

I observed oral/aural learning being used in many situations in Cuba. In my lessons with Pedro, I learned the Cuban *charanga* style of music exclusively through this technique: Pedro would play an example and I would play it back to him. This was not a case of an untrained musician, unable to read or write music, teaching me in the only way that he knew possible. This was the case of a highly trained pedagogue, with over 20 years of teaching experience, selecting non-notational based instruction as the most effective methodology to teach *charanga* style. I also observed oral/aural learning being used extensively in numerous choir rehearsals, even at a professional level.

Cuban music educators use this form of learning in their teaching not only because of the importance of oral/aural tradition in their society but also because many of them are involved in popular music, a style that has a strong tradition of non-notational based instruction. Many of the Cuban secondary music teachers with whom I came in contact were involved in dance bands, *latino* jazz groups, and salsa bands. Involvement in the popular music tradition may have caused them to be more apt to use this method of teaching.

In Cuba, because of the economic situation, students are further encouraged to decrease their reliance on printed music. Because printed music is in such short supply and because photocopies are of such poor quality, I found that students naturally moved away from reading music. Students were also encouraged to memorize materials at an early stage. Many groups I observed, including choirs, instrumental quartets, and non-popular music ensembles, performed from memory. In the majority of these cases, this made their performance better in terms of connecting with the audience, listening to one another, and general performance skills.

In my personal teaching, as a result of observing non-notational based instruction in Cuba, I am now more apt to feel comfortable or legitimized in moving away from the written page. I tend to have my students begin to memorize their music at a much earlier stage, even in formal classroom band and choir situations. When sight reading a piece, I immediately have students begin to memorize short sections. Further, I make memorization of compositions an expectation, and assist my students in building their memorization skills at an early stage.

In addition, I encourage students to learn to play music by ear. This skill is not something that I was attracted to do naturally, nor was this something that I was encouraged to do throughout my music training. I currently find myself, somewhat later in life, learning to do this and finding it rather difficult. I now encourage my young students to learn to play music by ear off the radio or from their favourite CD or television show.

Students return to my classroom excited by the music that they have learnt by ear. When students lift music off the radio, they become involved in music that is meaningful to them. According to Boardman Meske (1990), one of our weaknesses as a profession is that we do not provide students with a sufficient amount of meaningful musical experiences in the classroom. When students become excited about the music they are playing, their motivation to learn can be increased.

Insights for Music Educators

Figure 39: A poignant discussion in the grand front room of *CES* as the bust of Beethoven looks on.

How then can we adapt the positive aspects of the Cuban secondary music education system for our existing system in Canada? Are we prepared to be involved in education that involves a radical shift of its ideological paradigms? Will society allow us to make radical changes, given current trends in our educational climate? Do we need to make radical shifts or should we instead look at more subtle methods of introducing these aspects into our pedagogical practices? Or, are aspects of the Cuban secondary music education system even worthy of adoption into our existing system of music education?

First, I must state that I find music education in Canada to be very strong and successful. I am also firm in my belief that music educators are working to the best of their ability to teach students the value of music. As a result of my research in Cuba, however, I am convinced that there are many improvements that we can make to our existing system of music education in Canada.

It would be possible to develop Canadian applications for each of the perceived strengths of the Cuban music education system listed in this chapter but it would require an extensive amount of time and resources. Instead, I offer my recommendations as to the most important and the most easily adoptable aspects that can be incorporated into our Canadian system. These ideas will be presented in three sections as related to organization of curriculum, pedagogy, and culture.

Insights Into Possible Organizational/Curricular Applications

Many curricular applications of the Cuban music education system could be adapted to fit the existing system of music education in Canada. This said, the fundamental purposes of the two systems are not the same. Music education in Cuba serves primarily to educate students to become professional musicians/teachers. Music education in Canada serves primarily to provide a fine arts component to the general education of students destined for a variety of careers but not necessarily in the arts. I do not advocate that we change our philosophy of music education to that of the Cuban philosophy; however, we could greatly benefit if we developed schools that operated in a similar fashion to those found in Cuba.

The Cuban political system has made education a priority and has put great national effort into ensuring that students from all backgrounds (urban/rural, rich/poor), races, and genders have access to free, high-quality music education. Though we could make great strides in this area, it would be very difficult to achieve this goal for all students wanting to become music professionals within the foreseeable future. With the current pressures on our existing system of education in Canada, it would be difficult to ensure that all students who want to become professional musicians have equal access to free music education.

One of the most effective means to make improvements to the existing system of music education is to engage our education administrators in a philosophical shift. In my experience, many educational administrators have a limited understanding of what constitutes a good-quality music experience. Because many have not participated in school music, they have no experiential basis for developing their advocacy for the music program. This lack of experience may result in music programs being being afforded less priority. We need to have a greater number of education administrators who are actively involved in music or who have a background in this area.

Conversely, as a profession, we should encourage more music teachers to become involved in education administration. Beginning at the undergraduate level, music students should be encouraged to develop skills in order prepare them for administrative positions. Experienced music teachers should also be encouraged to develop their skills in this area.

There are several additional organizational/curricular features that make the Cuban system extremely effective. Of these, the most notable are early identification of potential music professionals, extensive audition procedures, high curricular standards, an emphasis on the early development of *solféo* skills, teaching and performance practica for secondary music students, a curriculum that allows for teacher flexibility, and twice-weekly lessons for piano and the student's instrument of choice. Many of these can be adapted to fit our existing system of music education in Canada.

Pedagogical strengths.

We are extremely fortunate in Canada in that the availability of communication technology and travel allow us access to the world's finest pedagogues. As a result, pedagogy is one of the strengths found in the Canadian system of education. Never before have our teachers been so well educated in pedagogical methodologies as they are today.

In the area of music education, our greatest recent gains in pedagogy can be found in the field of elementary music education. Canada's development of Orff, Kodaly, Suzuki, and Dalcroze approaches, and their incorporation into our schools, has resulted in notable improvements in the musical skills of our young children.

As a result of my research, I am convinced that all secondary music education teachers should have extensive training and practice with these elementary music methodologies. In this manner, not only would secondary teachers be exposed to current methodologies involving oral/aural learning and movement, two of the greatest strengths of the Cuban system, but they would also gain understanding into the continuity necessary in a child's music education. Like Green (2001), I advocate that we should expand our understanding of pedagogical practices used in informal teaching settings in order to increase the range of our pedagogical skills.

Other notable strengths of music pedagogy in Cuba include early memorization of music; early expansion of range; emphasis on technical development; early emphasis on tone quality, sound production, and breathing; and rhythmic involvement. Most notable are high curricular expectations and the collegial sharing of knowledge. These strengths can be easily adapted for our existing system of music education in Canada.

Cultural strengths.

Figure 40: Sugar cane being transported by oxcart in Piñar del Rio province.

Culture is a very important factor in any education system. Of the three areas of strength in the Cuban education system listed: (a) organization of the curriculum, (b) pedagogy, and (c) culture, I believe the area of culture to be the most difficult in which to nurture significant change. Changing how a culture values the arts in education is an extremely daunting task.

In attempting to make any changes to Canadian culture, one must be aware of the global forces that affect our culture. Too often, our teachers get discouraged in their attempts to keep music programs active because they lack a global perspective. What many fail to realize, as they are working so diligently, is that Canadian society is currently under immense pressure from such influences as globalization and multinational corporations. The pursuit of economic gains and consumerism, not the development of the arts, is the major focus of Canadian society. In direct contrast, Cuban society, while focusing on economic development through tourism, is capitalizing on the arts. As a result, development of the arts, in a culture that already values them to a high degree, is a priority.

Whereas we cannot easily change our society to one that values the arts to the same degree that Cubans do, we can learn from their situation. In doing so, we must be careful to chose our battles wisely. Specifically, there are three areas where we can make substantial gains.

First, we can benefit from understanding how Cubans have come to value both contemporary culture and Western European high art culture. In Canadian society, I find this balance difficult. As a music educator, I feel that it is my duty to expose my students to a wide range of music. However, in many ways, I feel pressured to concentrate on music that comes from the Western European Art Music tradition. At the same time, I enjoy and value contemporary popular music but feel that it is not as legitimized in its use in the music classroom by our profession.

Cuba, in contrast, appears comfortable with the delineation between contemporary popular music and Western European Art Music. Both are highly legitimized and valued. Cubans have great pride in their popular culture. Cubans also have great pride in the Afro-Cuban traditions of their country. They consider both to be legitimate art forms to be valued. Both also have highly skilled musicians who are respectful of one another. Therefore, both Cuban music, contemporary popular music and Afro-Cuban music alike, and Western European Art Music have a secure place in the Cuban curriculum.

I would like my music students to be more like Cuban music students. I would like to develop in my students a sense of pride not only in contemporary popular music but also in Canadian music and music of the Western European Art Music tradition. I would further like to develop discerning musical taste in my students, something I easily found in the general Cuban public. If I make these areas a priority in my classroom, I am convinced that I could help music become valued by a larger number of students.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, Cubans can teach us how to make participation in the arts a part of our national identity. Cuba is fortunate to have had a political and musical history that has aided in this area. Cubans have also worked hard at developing this identity in their culture. The Castro government is to be credited for its monetary and ideological support in this regard (*e.g.*, fine arts schools, free music education, etc.).

We can begin this fundamental change in our Canadian identity and music with a simple altering of our philosophy. Cubans believe that every person is an artist. More simply stated, Cubans believe that one does not need to be trained in the arts in order to be called an artist. Instead, each and every Cuban is born an artist, a dancer, a singer, an instrumentalist, a painter, a writer. Canadians, on the other hand, do not believe that they are born artists. Canadians, for the most part, believe that they have to receive training in order to call themselves artists.

This philosophical difference is best illustrated through the use of an example. If one were to walk into a party in Canada and request someone to sing a song, she would surely receive a few response of "oh not me, I am not a singer" or "no, I can't sing." Eventually however, someone in the crowd would be found who would be willing to sing.

In contrast, in Cuba, if one enters a party and says, "I need a singer," many would freely offer their services. Cubans believe that they are all artists. Never once in Cuba did I meet anyone who said, " I am not a singer" or "I don't sing." Several expressed that they didn't sing well but they still considered themselves capable of singing.

The same followed with dancers. Every Cuban is a dancer; every Cuban is capable of dancing. While some will state that they are not good dancers or do not enjoy it, very few will say, "I can't dance." If we as Canadians adopt the philosophy that we are all artists, we are all dancers, our efforts as music educators to increase involvement in the arts will be much easier.

Third, we can learn from the manner in which Cuban society is overtly supportive of its music teachers. For example, the Cuban system is very supportive of the professional development of music teachers in the manner that it is organized. Cuban music teachers can easily maintain positions both as professional musicians and as educators. The Canadian system, where school frequently starts at 8:00 a.m., is not conducive to having music educators maintain an active performing career. In addition, the Cuban system easily allows music teachers to travel internationally for an extended period of time and to return to their teaching posts. An application of both of these organizational factors could be of substantial benefit to the existing system of music education in Canada.

A system that easily allows professional musicians to be both educators and performers is one that could be beneficial both to students and teachers alike. Such a system prevents musicians from becoming compartmentalized or segregated into either being a "teacher" or a "player." Students receive the benefits of working with teachers who are actively developing themselves as musicians. Teachers get to be involved in music in the manner that probably inspired them to be teachers in the first place -- by participating in musical activities.

It must be noted that not only the positive aspects but also the challenges to the Cuban system of music education can provide us with valuable insight. For example, we as Canadian music educators can learn from the way Cuban educators have adapted to their facility limitations and the shortage of musical instruments/supplies in their country. Additionally, we share many of the challenges found in the Cuban system of music education: the loss of professional musicians to other countries or more lucrative professions, shortages of qualified music teachers, drastically reduced budgets, and the lack of a formal mentoring system for novice teachers. Despite these severe restrictions, Cuban music educators all agree that the skill levels of their students have increased substantially in recent years. Can we as Canadian music educators make these same claims?

Perhaps the best way we can learn from the Cuban system of music education is to copy its overwhelming spirit of sharing and camaraderie. As we continue to teach our students to the best of our ability, as we continue to question the pedagogical methods and curricular content of our programs, we should give freely of our expertise and share our knowledge with all of our colleagues. Unfortunately, one cannot truly understand the Cuba spirit by reading about it; one can really only understand it by experiencing it.

Areas for Further Research

Figure 41: A brightly coloured mural painted on the side of an apartment building in central Santiago. The work is entitled *Página del tiempo* (A Page in Time).

This study has only begun to touch the surface of understanding the Cuban music education system. North American music educators could substantially benefit from additional research on topics falling outside of the scope of research of the study. These topics can be divided into three major areas: (a) gender issues and music education in Cuba, (b) race issues and music education in Cuba, and (c) informal music education in Cuba. In the area of gender and music education, the following research questions could provide excellent future insights:

1. What factors influence the choice of instruments studied by male and female students involved in Cuban music education?
2. How does culture influence the instrument choices made by female and male students involved in Cuban music education?
3. How have instrumental preferences of male and female students changed in Cuba both prior to and after the Revolution?
4. Are research findings relating to the instrumental preferences of male and female students involved in Cuban music education consistent with findings of similar studies?
5. How have federal policies influenced the role of women in formal music education in Cuba?
6. How has the increased role of women in administration influenced the development of the formal music education system in Cuba?

In the area of race issues and music education in Cuba, the following research questions could provide valuable insights :

1. How do racial issues affect formal music education in Cuba?
2. How do racial issues affect professional Cuban musicians who have graduated from the formal system of music education in Cuba?

In the area of informal music education in Cuba, research focusing on the following questions could prove insightful:

1. How have federal policies related to race, gender, and culture influenced informal music education in Cuba since the Revolution?
2. What pedagogical practices are used in informal music education in Cuba and how are they similar to or different from those used in formal music education?

It must be noted that the existing system of Cuban music education is not necessarily a stable one. In a country well-known for radical political takeover, speculation as to changes that will occur in the post-Castro era are varied. What will happen after Castro is gone? The answer is one of uncertainty; the political future of Cuba after the Castro *vanguardia* is unpredictable.

What can be predicted is that the post-Castro music education system will continue to merit additional research. The emerging political situation after the passing of the *vanguardia* may significantly alter Cuban music education. New areas of research, currently unforeseen, may well emerge. The Cuban system of music education however may be relatively unaffected by “The Change.” Here too is a future that is unpredictable.

For the present, North Americans can benefit from extant research on the Cuban music education system by adapting, when possible, the observed strengths of the Cuban system to fit the North American model of music education. The adoption/adaptation of

Cuban emphasis on high curricular expectations, the pedagogy of memorization, ear training through solfeggio, oral/aural learning, and rhythmic development by means of corporal expression would serve to strengthen the North American system in the development/achievement of high quality performance standards. The North American system of music education would also be well served by the adoption/adaptation of Cuban emphasis on cultural aspects such as the encouragement of participation in the arts as a contributing factor of national identity, extensive governmental and community support of music teachers, equal valuing of contemporary and Western European high art culture, and collegial sharing of knowledge.

Figure 42: A friendly game of dominoes in the middle of a Santiago street.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

February 2, 2003

Dear Participants,

I am a student in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, where I am completing my Ph.D. studies. Currently, I am focusing my research on how culture influences music education programs in Cuban secondary schools. Specifically, I am concentrating on the manner in which music is valued and taught, the role of the community, pedagogical practices, and the creation and implementation of curriculum.

Participation in this study is voluntary and interviews will take place at the convenience of the interviewee. Interviews will be recorded on an individual basis and will last a maximum of 60 minutes. The study will result in no injury or harm to any of the participants. To assure anonymity and confidentiality, names of participants will be altered. If a participant wishes to end his/her involvement with the study, or if s/he chooses not to respond to a question, s/he may freely do so at any time.

If you would like to participate in the study, please read and sign the attached consent form. Participants younger than 18 years of age must obtain the signature of a parent or guardian. Thank you for your assistance.

Consent Form

An Ethnographic Study of Secondary Music Education in Santiago de Cuba: Insights for Canadian Music Educators

I, ______________________________ (name), have read the above information and do hereby consent to participate in the study.

______________________________ (signature)   ___________ (date)

A parent of guardian must complete the following if the participant is less than 18 years old.

I, ______________________________ (name), have read the above information and do hereby give my permission for my son (daughter) to participate in the study.

______________________________ (signature)   ___________ (date)

Note: If a participant has any further questions relating to the study, s/he may contact the researcher, Lisa Lorenzino (**llorenzino@hotmail.com**), or her supervisor, Dr. Thomas Dust (**tom.dust@ualberta.ca**), at his/her convenience.

Appendix B: *Nivel Básico* Flute Curriculum

Recommended Texts

Method Books

Altès, H. *Celebre método completo de flauta (V. 1 & 2)*. Paris: Leduc.

Moyse, M. *De la séria enseñanza completa de la flauta; una selección de ejercicios ténicas*. La Habana: EGREM.

Tomasewski, F. *Colección de estudios de autores tradicionales de la flauta (V. 1 & 2)*. Havana: EGREM.

Repertoire

Badía, M. *Preludio para flauta y piano.*
Guajira para flauta y piano.
Danza caribeña.
La silueta de un recelo.

Belaknirov, Y. *Repertorio pedagógico: album de obras para flauta con acompañamiento de piano*. Havana: Edición Nacional.

Handel, F. *Sonata for flute.*

Repertorio pedagógico: Album de obras para flauta con acompañamiento de piano. Havana: EGREM.

First Year Objectives

1. Students will gain an understanding of the general concept of their instrument.
2. Students will demonstrate the correct positioning of the body, arms, and hands while playing their instrument.
3. Students will demonstrate diaphragmatic breathing while playing their instrument.
4. Students will play the first sounds on their instrument with good tone (first and second octaves of the flute).
5. Students will play the first scales and arpeggios on their instrument with a variety of articulations (C, D, F, and G major, and their relative minors).
6. Students will play the first lessons from the Altès book (Lessons 1-12) and a variety of repertoire as selected by their teacher.
7. Students will play the first eight études, in the keys of F major and D minor, from their method books.

Second Year Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate the elements of musical phrasing.
2. Students will play scales and arpeggios (two octaves) in the keys of C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, and Bb major (and relative minors) with a variety of articulations.
3. Students will play a two-octave chromatic scale with a variety of articulations.
4. Students will play a minimum of eight études (Tomasewski and Altès [up to and including Lesson 16]).
5. Students will perform repertoire including at least one Cuban work per reporting period.

Third Year Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate technical and artistic skills previously learned and apply them to their personal development.
2. Students will play notes over the entire range of their instrument.
3. Students will demonstrate a knowledge of tuning.
4. Students will play scales, arpeggios, and dominant seventh chords in the keys of C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb, A and E major (and relative minors).
5. Students will play a minimum of eight études (up to and including Altès Lesson 19).
6. Students will perform repertoire including at least one Cuban work per reporting period.

Fourth and Fifth Year Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate technical and artistic skills learned in previous years and apply them to their personal development.
2. Students will prepare their program for the *pase el nivel* exam.
3. Students will develop their concepts of style, expression, and musical taste.
4. Students will play all major and minor scales, arpeggios, dominant seventh chords and a chromatic scale, with a variety of articulations, over the entire range of their instrument (one breath ascending, one breath descending).
5. Students will learn all études in their method books up to and including Altès Lesson 23 and Moyse Lessons 3, 3a, and 4.
6. Students will begin the study of vibrato.
7. Students will perform repertoire including at least one Cuban work per reporting period.

Appendix C: Sight Singing Audition Material for *CES*

1. Sing the following chords in succession as ascending broken triads (D or Bb major):

V_6 I IV I_6 VII^6_4 V V_7 I

2. Sing the following intervals:

(a) an ascending major second starting on D

(b) a descending major seventh starting on A

(c) a descending tritone starting on C

(d) a descending major sixth starting on D#

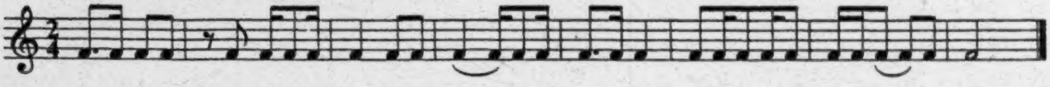
(e) an ascending perfect fifth starting on E

3. Sing the following, ascending and descending, using *solféo* syllables:

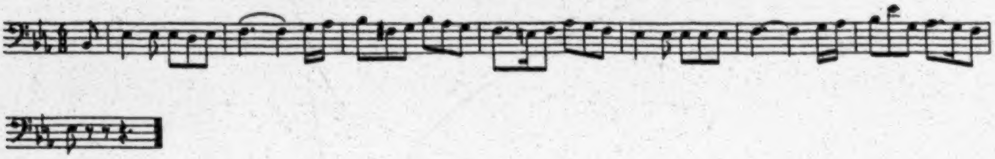
(a) a melodic minor scale

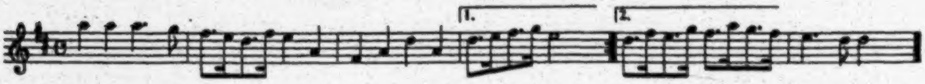
(b) a Phrygian scale starting on E

4. Clap the following rhythm:



5. Sing both of the following examples using *solféo* syllables (fixed Do):





Appendix D: Graduation Recital Program

Maria Teresa Lescay Ruig, Guitar

Conservatorio "Esteban Salas"

May 28, 2003, 3:00 p.m.

Santiago de Cuba

Guitar

Sonata in A Major (K322) by Doménico Scarlatti

Las Folias de España by Fernando Sor

Mexican Song #1 by Manuel Ponce

Grand Waltz in A Major by Francisco Tarrega

Three Pieces Without a Title by Leo Brower

(Text by Maria Lescay)

Pacoca by Celso Machado

(Guest Flutist Antonio Vera)

Tres

Aflorando encuentro by Piloto y Vera

Comienzo y final de una verde manãna by Pablo Milanés